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**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TRENDING TALENT ACQUISITION
TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my Angel in Heaven, Professor Narainsamy Naidu whom I was privileged enough to call Dad. He has always and will always be my Northern Star.

My Dad always encouraged continuous education and so I held true to my word by persevering and continuing my academic career throughout his battle. He taught me a lifetime of lessons in our short time together and for that I will be eternally grateful.

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- I truly hope this dissertation reflects the journey we have been on since conception and subsequently brings pride to all those who have contributed to its successful compilation.

Editorial Letter

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To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that, I, Lynne Southey, edited the language in this mini-dissertation, “**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TRENDING TALENT ACQUISITION TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**” by **DASHALIA NAIDU**.

The onus is on the author to attend to the suggested changes. Furthermore, I do not take responsibility for any changes in the document after the fact.

Lynne Southey (Editor)

25 September 2019

Abstract

The review of talent acquisition tools and techniques used in South Africa is not widely available in literature. To implement and utilise appropriate tools and techniques to foster talent acquisition and maintain competitive advantage in this regard, organisations need to keep their finger on the pulse. Therefore, the subsequent research aimed to provide greater insight.

The purpose of the dissertation was to review current literature on global trends of talent acquisition tools and techniques, thereafter provide insight on the trending tools and techniques used in the South African context. Along with the reported trends, their impacts and best practice were reviewed.

Due to the dire need for South African context-based research on talent acquisition tools and techniques used, this study reports on empirical results as informed by some of South Africa's largest insurers.

The empirical results were obtained by using a qualitative research method with an interpretative approach. Qualitative surveys in the form of semi-structured interviews were used as the data collection tool to extract the relevant information from the three participating organisations. Thematic analysis was used to thoroughly analyse and structure the raw data.

The main findings reflected that each organisation makes use of talent acquisition mechanisms as they see fit with a steady incline in the use of digital and online tools and techniques. The impacts and best practices and policies applied are further discussed although the consensus leans towards reasonable accommodation and emphasis on diversity and inclusion.

The dissertation contributed to talent acquisition practices as the empirical findings reflected practices which are relatable and representative of similar organisations' current way of work. More so, the literature reviewed is current and informative.

Key words: Talent, talent acquisition, tools, techniques and trends

Declaration of Originality

I, Dashalia Naidu, hereby declare that the information reflected in the dissertation is my own work both in content and execution. When someone else's work was used, due acknowledgement was given as they were cited in text and in the list of references.

I declare that the content of this dissertation has never been submitted for any other qualification at any other higher education institute. I did not make use of another student's work and submit it as my own. I also did not and will not allow any individual to copy my work with the intention of submitting it as their own.

Furthermore, I declare that Lynne Southey has edited the language of this dissertation.

Signed by: Dashalia Naidu

Date: 07 October 2019

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In this dissertation, the researcher set out to ascertain the trending talent acquisition techniques used by organisations in the South African context. In doing so, the endeavour was divided into five chapters, which made up the study. Chapter 1 aimed to provide an overview of the rest of the study and Chapter 2 delves into the available literature regarding trends in talent acquisition. Furthermore, Chapter 3 intended to provide the detailed methodology followed to achieve credible research whilst Chapter 4 looked at the results from the qualitative and Chapter 5 culminates the findings and literature to provide relevant insight.

This research endeavours toward discovering and reporting on trending talent acquisition tools and techniques used by organisations to recruit and select talent, particularly in the South African context. The research intends on informing academia and practitioners on trends which have not been sufficiently covered within this context alongside the various impacts experienced.

The empirical data has been based on three South African organisations in the insurance industry. The goal of the dissertation is to report on trending talent acquisition tools and techniques used on a global basis whilst realistically depicting a representative sample of such trends in the present context.

1.2. Background

The talent acquisition process is a key concept in assisting companies to determine the best candidates to hire. If accurately designed and executed, acquisition tools and techniques can identify, attract and acquire highly competent candidates. More so, these assistive tools can accurately match talent to the most fitting jobs and organisation in entirety. The use of fitting acquisition techniques and tools will positively impact the probability that the best applicants are chosen to fill key roles (Ekwoaba, Ikeije, & Ufoma, 2015).

Further, a growing amount of research evidence supports the tendency of European and American companies increasingly utilizing more technologically advanced mediums than in previous years to attract and acquire suitable applicants of quality (Louw, 2013).

It is only fitting, that the South African context should be well informed in this regard to develop and compete at higher standards. The trend is to move beyond simple efficiencies when acquiring talent and rather focus more on the quality of hire (Hauenstein, 2013). The use of relevant programmes and systems in the acquisition process seem to be leading the way in efficient proficiency detection. Such examples are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

1.3. Justification

Talent acquisition techniques in South Africa must be more strategic in entirety to detect the candidates with the strongest capabilities and place them in positions that will be most effective for the candidate and the organisation. This can be done with the use of innovation and efficiency, customisation and consistency, transparency and effectiveness, wide-reach and coherence, as well as diversity and standardisation (Ryan, 2016), all of which can be achieved for organisations to remain world class in the South African context.

More so, there is often a world of difference between what practitioners do and what academic research advises. To align common goals, this study intends to identify newer acquisition techniques used on a global basis as well as those which are being utilised in the South African context.

In response to the shortage of research conducted on the topic of talent acquisition tools and techniques which are popular in South Africa, the study to follow will highlight trending practices in this discipline. The case studies presented intend to report on the height of innovation perceived to have been achieved and educate readers on the level of functioning in the Talent Acquisition (TA) space in this context.

1.4. Research Objectives

The study will be guided by the following primary research question: **“Which talent acquisition tools and techniques are trending in the South African context?”**

The following secondary research questions are explored to comprehend the above-mentioned primary research question:

- Which talent acquisition tools and techniques are increasingly being used in the Talent Management space on global and local bases?
- What are the perceived impacts of current talent acquisition tools and techniques?
- What best practices are in place to ensure the organisation its talent acquisition objectives?

1.5. Academic Value and Contribution of the Study

The purpose of this study is to enlighten readers on trending talent acquisition tools and techniques which have been derived from literary evidence. Along with the literature-based evidence, qualitative surveys were conducted to inform new research in this regard, especially in the Talent Management (TM) context, given the lack of research in this area particularly in the South African context.

Additionally, by making use of the interpretive paradigm the researcher was able to provide insightful interpretations of the observed data. As a result, the interpretations intended to add valuable contributions to the academic fields of Human Resources Management (HRM), Industrial and Organisational Psychology (IOP), Marketing and Communication as well as Information Technology (IT).

1.6. Delimitations

This research piece focuses on reviewing current literature on talent acquisition trending techniques and tools in addition to reporting on empirical findings. The study is based within the talent management context specifically focusing on talent acquisition trends, impacts of those trends and best practice. Moreover, the sample

group for the qualitative survey includes a diverse range of professionals such as TA teams and management from operations.

The trending acquisition techniques, both from literature and the qualitative survey primarily intend to inform future research on the subject and advise on trending practices for organisations operating within the insurance industry.

1.7. Literature Review

The results of the literary search reflect various platforms which are considered popular talent acquisition techniques and tools. The study will include further research into the impacts of named trends and best practices as applicable.

1.7.1. Digitalisation, Automation and Artificial Intelligence

The underlying focus here is identifying trends that are being used at an increased pace and producing more positive outcomes than others. Companies are recognising the need to build in technology that complements their human capabilities rather than replaces it and which strives to attract creative, innovative and critical thinking talent and streamline the acquisition process (Lam & Hawkes, 2017).

This section of the literature review interprets and provides insight into various aspects of reported trends in digitalised TA, automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) inspired practices in the field.

1.7.2. Social Media

The literature indicates LinkedIn and Facebook are the social media giants in the world of recruitment and selection. These platforms allow users to create online profiles for themselves, highlighting achievements, associations and business perspectives.

Social media may be connected to employer branding and digitalisation as an acquisition tool, therefore it is highly flexible in its function and should be used with

caution to prevent the violation of candidate privacy and employer bias (Madia, 2011). The social media segment of the literature review considers its definition and the impacts seen when recruiters employ social network sites as primary resources.

1.7.3. Employer Branding

By improving recruitment results and reducing costs, favourable employer branding has been aptly defined as building a reputation and creating an image of the organisation as a highly rated employer of choice (Sokro, 2012).

Employer branding trends and strategies are reviewed along with their impact on talent acquisition. In keeping with the theme of trending talent acquisition techniques, employer branding brings together social media and digitalisation in an effort to encourage the investment in branding strategies.

1.7.4. Internet Screening

To achieve best fit and maintain best practice standards, employers may find it necessary to go the extra mile by inserting internet screening into its initial talent acquisition steps.

Internet screening may be an eligible option for some organisations as the talent being acquired is for high priority roles where skills are becoming scarcer on a regular basis. The primary intention of internet screening includes obtaining relevant information on applicants' career backgrounds, competencies acquired, personality attributes and potential for successful future performance (Jeske & Schultz, 2016).

1.7.5. Computer Adaptive Testing

Computerised Adaptive Testing (CAT) may be defined as a talent acquisition tool that applies a prediction code that shortens the test without sacrificing its accuracy. CAT is designed to adapt to the applicants' ability level (Shapiro & Gebhardt, 2012). Shapiro and Gebhardt (2012) go on to say that this is achieved through refining the item selection process based on the applicants' response and provides a mechanism

for identifying the particular abilities and potential problem areas within the assessment domain.

In addition, talent management involves planning for the development and success of the talent acquired. CATs are suitable in the quest to improve talent acquisition as they are designed to measure various characteristics that are predictive of employee performance. The predictive trait of CATs is highly applicable in TM so as to assist with succession and developmental planning of key role players.

1.7.6. Mobile Testing

Mobile testing can be said to be mobile versions of talent acquisition assessments. These have shown to be equivalent to non-mobile versions across varied forms. Mobile tests may include cognitive ability tests, situational judgment tests, multimedia work simulations (Morelli, Mahan, & Illingworth, 2014), and personality and general mental ability tests (Arthur, Doverspike, Muñoz, Taylor, & Carr, 2014).

Although the current adoption of mobile assessments is less prevalent (Arthur et al., 2014), 43% of HRM professionals indicate that they would use assessments that were available on mobile devices instead of hand-written tools (Kantrowitz, 2014). The demand among organisations for mobile testing has continued to increase (LaPort, Huynh, Stemer, Ryer, & Moretti, 2016).

1.8. Research Methodology

The research methodology provides a brief overview of the structure and contents of Chapter 3 which alludes to the procedure and considerations made to conduct the research in an ethical and credible manner.

1.8.1. Research Paradigm

The present research is intended to contribute primarily to the Industrial and Organisational Psychology and Human Resources Management fields. Other fields which may benefit from the results of this study include Information Technology,

Marketing and Branding as well as Communications. The researcher intends basing inferences on various sources of literary information. This will be achieved by synthesising the literature and drawing conclusions to enhance the quality of the study. The intention was to make use of a step-by-step approach that allowed the researcher to compile a coherent piece of research of value.

Methodological paradigm: Qualitative method.

Epistemological paradigm: The researcher used an interpretive approach as the research objectives were based on the perceived trends in talent acquisition tools. The essence of the interpretive paradigm lies in collection and interpretation of data by drawing inferences and making possible judgements (Schommer-Aikins, 2002). This approach is best suited as the trends were deduced from the qualitative survey, which was a subjective standpoint, alongside the collected literature. Together, the sources of data were collected and interpreted using the interpretive approach.

1.8.2. Quality Assessment

The literature included was evaluated by making use of a quality criterion to further ensure that it was viable and credible. Chapter 3 includes a display of the quality criteria used to assess the literature.

1.8.3. Research Design

The research design was based on a qualitative survey approach. This decision was made as the area of interest had a vast array of possible contributions and a qualitative survey was most valuable. Further, the survey was best suited to address several perspectives from the sample group while maintaining ethical standards and simultaneously allowing for interpretation (Sofaer, 1999).

1.8.4. Sampling Method

To provide valuable and appropriate information to readers, the researcher's endeavour was to access the most diverse sample as possible. This allowed for variation in perceptions and broadened the knowledge currently available on talent acquisition tools.

By considering the need to ensure diversity in the sample group, the researcher made use of a purposive sampling approach. This sampling technique was used to select participants based on the purpose of the study as posed by the research questions. Teddlie and Yu (2007) mention typical characteristics of purposive sampling that further substantiate its value to this study. Substantiating characteristics includes the endeavour to account for generalisability of the finding, a sample that is selected to address a specific case, and the focus on narrative data.

1.8.5. Data Collection

The interview data was collected by way of qualitative interviews. According to Sofaer (1999), these are ideal for research endeavours which need to be prompt, economical and maintain anonymity while gathering substantial data.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format as this allowed conversational-type data collection, allowing for exploration of participants' perceptions (Barriball & While, 1994).

The drafted data collection instrument included the following core items along with the basic biographical items of the participant, as well as the consent form and introduction:

- Organisation's client base
- Organisation's historical background
- Current talent acquisition tools used by the organisation
- The participants were not compensated for the participation as this is voluntary.

1.8.6. Data Analysis

The data captured from the interviews was analysed using thematic analysis which is subjected to identification, analysis and reporting of patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was beneficial to the study as it allowed the researcher to identify patterns in themes at a quicker rate in comparison to other data analysis techniques.

1.8.7. Research Ethics

This research study is one that forms part of the Master's Degree in partial completion of the Industrial and Organisational Psychology course. The observations, documentation and interviews conducted are safely stored and remain confidential as was the researcher's responsibility.

In addition, data specifically from the qualitative survey was used only once informed consent from the participants had been obtained. Further, ethical clearance was granted by the University of Pretoria after the study was approved. All information obtained from the survey was used with the utmost accuracy and confidentiality, according to what the participants preferred.

1.9. Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 explores a brief overview of the study by providing an introduction, background, research questions, literary overview, and brief insight into the methodology.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2 presents a review of trending talent acquisition tools and techniques found in literature relative to the study. It explores the research questions from a literary standpoint with emphasis on Talent Acquisition in Talent Management.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 3 provides a detailed discussion of the research design and data outcomes generation. This includes the data collection method and sampling technique, followed by a discussion of the data analysis process. The chapter concludes with a detailed review of the quality criteria and ethical considerations necessary for the study.

Chapter 4: Results of Findings

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the qualitative surveys in the form of three case studies. The findings are grouped per organisation which are later discussed based on common themes.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Results and Conclusion

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the themes and sub-themes which emerged from the research questions in relation to the findings. Chapter 5 also provides a collation of the main findings and literary relevance whilst addressing the research questions. Finally, this chapter provides potential limitations and implications of the study. The conclusion of the research will synthesize the information gathered and ultimately answer the research questions initially posed.

1.10. Conclusion

This research focuses on reviewing current literature on trending talent acquisition techniques and tools, and on the findings from the qualitative surveys conducted. The research was considered most applicable to organisations which operate within the South African context. Further, the sample group for the case studies included three large organisations of which function in the insurance market.

Finally, the findings from the literature and the qualitative surveys were primarily intended to inform future research and readers on trending talent acquisition tools techniques and advise on suitable practices for organisations operating within the environment.

Chapter 2 seeks to discuss the literary findings concerning the descriptions of core concepts, trending talent acquisition tools and techniques on a global basis, impacts of such practices as well as best practices when utilising the mentioned techniques and tools.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Chapter 2 seeks to inform the present research by reporting and elaborating on various trending talent acquisition tools and techniques as found in recent available literature. The chapter begins by defining core concepts, namely, talent, Talent Management and Talent Acquisition. It then goes on to report on trends in recruitment and selection, advising on best practices regarding the use of trending techniques, and concludes by synthesising the information. The current research aims to shed light on the use of contemporary talent acquisition methods in the talent management space as well as possible impacts on organisations. The overall intention is an attempt to attract and acquire the best individuals from the available talent pool for organisations to reach optimal outcomes.

2.2. Defining Talent, Talent Management and Talent Acquisition

This section seeks to define the core concepts on which this study is based. In doing so, talent, Talent Management and Talent Acquisition are discussed in detail in the proceeding sections.

2.2.1. Talent

Talent has become a contested concept among seasoned scholars, leaving a plethora of definitions and interpretations for novice researchers to navigate. Ultimately, authors have decided to opt for definitions of the concept that best fits the term talent depending on the specific context. Here, the researcher aims to provide various definitions with the intention of creating a culminated version.

One author denoted talent comprehensively:

Talent refers to systematically developed innate abilities of individuals that are deployed in activities they like, find important, and in which they want to invest energy. It enables individuals to perform excellently in one or more domains of human

functioning, operationalised as performing better than other individuals of the same age or experience, or as performing consistently at their personal best. (Nijs, Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries, & Sels, 2014)

Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz (2013) compiled a listing of several definitions of talent in the world of work as noted by various academic figures. For instance, Williams (2000) notes that talent comprises individuals who regularly display exceptional ability in an array of situations, while Stahl et al. (2007) describe talent as a specific group of employees who feature at the highest levels of functioning in terms of their capability and performance in relation to the entire workforce. According to Tansley (2011), talent may be conceptualised as being made up of knowledge, skills and competencies held by an individual.

Akar and Sharma (2018) concluded that talent is a quality that everyone is born with. They have noted that being skilled is not enough to be talented. Therefore, talent in this context constitutes having the necessary skills to add to the organisation's accomplishments by focusing on specific areas and objectives as found to be relevant. Finally, Ulrich and Smallwood (2012) have managed to summarise many authors' definitions of talent by defining the term using the three Cs – commitment, competence and contribution.

The concept of talent may therefore be said to be a pool of individuals who are set apart from the overall workforce based on their potential to reach the greatest heights, natural ability to excel in various tasks, and overall contributions to the organisation's vision.

2.2.2. Talent Management

Scholars agree that talent is the dominant success driver in any organisation, and companies are more often constrained by their human resources than any other resource. Likewise, it can be deduced that organisational success and wealth rely heavily on the financial investments made in TM (Kehinde, 2012).

Once the concept of talent has been clarified, the management thereof should be focused on attracting, developing and retaining the internal talent pool. The internal talent pool contributes greatly to the organisation's strategic objectives and inevitably its financial success, productivity and customer satisfaction (Bethke-Langenegger, Mahler, & Staffelbach, 2011).

Talent management is especially imperative to an organisation's success when considering the search for talent. Specifically, where a company is constantly competing for talent to obtain and maintain an internal competitive advantage to set it drastically above the competition. In a complex debate on the issue, Collings and Mellahi's (2009) definition of Talent Management stood out as they state that TM comprises three stages:

1. Systems and processes aimed at identifying key roles that contribute to maintaining the organisation's competitive advantage
2. Developing the talent pool to create incumbents who will be able to successfully fulfil key roles
3. Developing Human Resources architecture that will allow these key roles to be filled by employees who are competent and will remain committed.

Iles (2008) notes talent management to be the identification, engagement and retention of employees who are either high potential and will add great value in the future or employees who will fill critical roles in the organisation.

Similarly, Collings and Mellahi (2009) define talent management as the systematic identification of critical roles that will add value to the organisation in a differential manner, thus creating sustainable competitive advantage, and developing a high potential talent pool with an overall commitment to the organisation.

Talent management is much more than an operational administrative function when managing a company's human capital. It concentrates on individual employees (talent), their skill sets, potential to learn, and desire to grow within the organisation (Khatri, Gupta, Gulati, & Chauhan, 2010). The management of talent therefore entails focused human resources policies and practices that are engineered to increase and

improve the talent pool, ensuring it consists of high potential and high performing talent.

Meyers, Van Woerkom and Dries (2013) refer to talent management as the systematic utilisation of HRM activities to attract, identify, develop, and retain individuals who are considered to be 'talented'. Meyer (2005) highlights that the attraction, growth and retention of talent are key factors for modern organisations that are knowledge-driven. To be known as an employer of choice is considered a key organisational goal with direct benefits.

Akar and Sharma's (2018) definition of talent management describes it as attracting, recruiting, engaging, developing and retaining those who possess potential, aptitude and abilities to meet current and future organisational needs and are most likely to create value for the organisation and themselves.

2.2.3. Talent Acquisition

One of the first steps in TM is talent acquisition. Based on the importance of successfully managing talent in any organisation, the initial attraction of talent is of high importance. Talent acquisition may be briefly defined as sourcing and attracting talented individuals who are perceived to have the potential to fulfil key roles within an organisation as they possess natural ability, organisational fit and the capability to contribute beyond the status quo (Bhati & Manimala, 2011).

More so, attracting and selecting talent that is fit for purpose - the right candidate for the right job, contributes greatly to the rate and quality at which organisations' outcomes are attained. Obtaining optimal outcomes and efficiency therefore relies heavily on the talent acquisition techniques utilised to assist in identifying talent within a given talent pool (Bäckström & Björklund, 2017).

Talent acquisition may be further defined as the process of identification, attraction, engagement and retention of high potential candidates for roles that are most likely critical to organisational functioning. The acquisition of talent serves as a unique

competitive advantage, although often it proves challenging for talent acquisition teams to find the perfect fit for the role and the organisation (Tyagi, 2012).

Selecting the best candidate for the job not only determines the company's attainment of its end goal, but the level of efficiency at which it is accomplished. Newer selection tools may assist in identifying outstanding candidates (Backstrom, 2017) who will add to the competitive advantage of the company's human capital component.

Figure 1 displays the system that makes up the talent management process as used by organisations to strategize their efforts in terms of successfully managing talent. The figure further depicts the positioning of the talent acquisition function.



Figure 1: Talent Management Lifecycle (Schiemann, 2014)

2.3. Shifting the Focus to Trending Talent Acquisition Tools and Techniques

The Talent Management field is rapidly gaining attention and Talent Acquisition is gaining greater recognition for its role in the TM process whilst the tools and techniques for acquiring talent are constantly being upgraded (Kumudha & Priyadarshini, 2016). The results of the literary search reflect various platforms and

methods of talent acquisition which are considered popular. The research indicated trends inclusive of digitalisation, automation and artificial intelligence, social media, employer branding, internet screening, computer adaptive testing and mobile testing. According to a recently published article in Forbes Magazine, trends in TM for 2019 include digitalising HRM, using virtual reality (VR) tools for recruitment and selection of employees, and applying Artificial Intelligence (AI) to the talent acquisition process. These tools and techniques have been used by companies such as Deloitte where advantages experienced include higher quality talent pools. This may be the result of greater effort toward sourcing, applying VR tours of the workplace as part of the job advertisement and increasing candidate interaction experiences.

McCarthy, Bauer, Truxillo, Anderson, Costa and Ahmed (2017) state that since the turn of the millennium, the internet has become a key medium through which organisations attract and acquire employees. Further, according to McCarthy et al (2017) in recent years, approximately 74% of large American companies have made use of electronic selection (e-selection) to assist their hiring processes. Furthermore, McCarthy et al. (2017) conducted a comprehensive analysis of published articles, dating back to 2000 that revealed numerous research trends, one of which included the continuous emphasis on the role of technology in the talent acquisition process.

According to Stone and Stone (2015), e-selection refers to several types of technological devices and assessment methods used by organisations to grasp the degree to which applicants fit relevant job criteria, which may include various knowledge sets, abilities and skills (KSAs).

In addition to face-value benefit that e-selection and e-recruitment have shown, underlying benefits include higher assurance of objectivity in handling applications, and lowering costs dramatically for applicants and organisations, when compared to traditional selection methods. Finally, as there are usually two parties involved in the acquisition process, namely, the applicant and the organisation, it has been reported that applicants generally have a positive attitude towards online selection processes (McCarthy et al., 2017).

In summary, Iles, Preece and Chuai (2010) note that there is an exclusive approach to talent that looks at it through a lens of subsets of employees whose amalgamation of human capital, attitudinal traits and behavioural characteristics entail high potential for current and future value for an organisation. The additional approach to talent is one that is inclusive and views all employees as talent with the vision of creating sustainable competitiveness.

‘e-Talent Acquisition’ (e-TA) seems to be an appropriate term to accurately summarise the current trends in the recruitment and selection of talent. e-TA consists of e-recruitment and e-selection practices that revolve around the digitalisation of processes, increased use of the internet and mobile applications as primary platforms for recruitment and selection (Wang, 2018). With the world steadily moving towards the automation of processes across the spectrum, the effective use of e-recruitment and e-selection is constantly reiterated in organisations and literature.

The state of global competitiveness in the marketplace has bolstered recruitment and selection to be key factors of organisational effectiveness, among other success outcomes. Recruitment and selection combined make up the talent acquisition function, which can be highly complex, with crucial decisions having to be made by the candidate as well as the organisation. e-TA has gained increasing popularity, given that the traditional methods of acquisition require a high degree of manual processing, slowing down the decision-making component and driving up costs in terms of companies’ talent acquisition process (Phillips-Wren, Doran, & Merrill, 2016). In the vast information offered by improved technology, is Dutta’s (2014) reminder to practitioners and scholars to always weigh the various options available for acquiring talent, based on the business’s unique requirements and possible restraints. This is worth noting as it is important to take cognisance of the differences and benefits offered by the multitude of talent acquisition trends along with the organisation’s capacity for change and adaptability.

To capture and report the most recent trends in talent acquisition, the researcher found it best to base the literature review on academic literature, and statistics and reports conveyed by reputable sources such as Deloitte, Forbes, PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC) and an array of references alluded to by these articles. Included are well-known

and trusted entities to create the most informative piece of research and uphold relevance in the community of practice. Some of the first results that appear when searching for such trends revolve around digitalisation of HRM and TM functions, building talent pools internally and externally, candidate experience considerations, digitalisation and automation of recruitment processes, which goes together with artificial intelligence, employer branding and social media.

Recruitment and selection are common practices and form the initial component of the TM process, therefore setting the tone for the rest of the incumbents' career and the organisation for that duration. Although these processes can be done manually at an operational level, the epidemic of scarce skills pushes organisations to streamline operational, time-intensive activities to make time for up-skilling and enhancing their talent – albeit at an operational level.

2.3.1. Digitalisation, Automation and Artificial Intelligence

The underlying focus here is identifying trending talent acquisition methods that are being used at an increased pace and producing more positive outcomes than others. That is, TA trends which are leading the way in creating environments where people work in synchronisation with technology and the way of work highlights people AND technology as opposed to people OR technology. Companies are recognising the need to incorporate technology that complements their human capabilities rather than replacing it, to strive to attract creative, innovative and critical thinking talent and streamline the acquisition process (Lam & Hawkes, 2017).

The digitalisation and automation of the talent acquisition process can be defined as the evolution of TM and HRM. These functions have increasingly become operationalised on automated platforms and continue to be developed on various digital platforms. Such progress contributes to key success factors of the talent acquisition process such as candidate expectations and the branding of the organisation as an employer of choice. These can be attributed to the technologically advanced operating systems and continuous evolution (Popov, 2018).

Digital HRM may be formally described as efforts aimed at making processes more efficient with the heightened use of social, mobile, cloud and analytics technology. Digital HRM results in much greater depth of the HRM function than simply using technology to replace manual functions. Jeff Mike from Bersin by Deloitte elaborates by saying: “Digital HRM should also align culture, talent, structure, and processes to balance efficiency and innovation, as well as to sustain a measurable impact on the greater organisation as it continuously transforms” (Mike, 2018).

The digital transformation of HRM functioning is allowing TA professionals to operate at a strategic level where they are more capable of accessing and reporting on data such as trends spotted in recruitment and selection costs, candidate preferences, and organisational TA performance in comparison to industry competitors. Additionally, digital TA has allowed for recruitment predictors and data-intensive pre-selection processes and so they are winning the Talent War by implementing and encouraging the digitalisation of the TA functions (Mike, 2018).

In August 2018, Forbes India reported the results and methodology of their annual Aon survey conducted on 557 talent acquisition professionals across Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. Forbes divulged the seven-step process to navigating the digital world in talent acquisition that began with understanding the business’s challenges, demography, and future workforce needs. Re-emphasising the company’s brand, strategically sourcing talent and leveraging technology creates unique candidate experiences and consistent interview processes, making use of HR metrics. The Aon survey was holistic in nature and the outcomes reflected that although many companies prefer to move into the digital age at a faster pace, it is crucial to remember that, much like humans, each company has its own needs and constraints that must be taken into consideration when deciding on core operating mechanisms such as recruitment management processes and selection tools (Singh, 2018).

In addition, the Harvard Business Review (HBR) reported companies are beginning to see the benefits of AI in recruitment, with 96% of senior HR professionals believing AI has the potential to greatly enhance talent acquisition and retention.

Deloitte is one of the most coveted HR-intensive organisations across the globe; their authors provide brief insight into AI technology being utilised in the recruitment and

selection space (Volini, 2019), including chatbots, recruitment applications and job description development programmes.

The chatbots service, fondly named Wade and Wendy, is an effective example of how AI meets recruitment and career planning. Wade's function is to assist employees with strategizing their careers by making career opportunities in the company more visible. Wendy, on the other hand, has the opportunity of interacting with candidates by promoting the company's culture, job opportunities and hiring process. Another interesting application of the chatbots service is Firstjob's Mya. Mya has managed to reduce the number of common candidate questions by 75%.

Easy recruitment applications such as Switch, like dating applications, have been designed where available jobs that fit the candidates' criteria are displayed and the candidate is given the opportunity to explore further or move on.

Companies such as the software vendor Unitive apply AI to develop and write job descriptions based on discussions about the job and thorough role profiling. The result is a programme that can develop more inclusive and attractive job descriptions based on the data available and on predictive analytics capabilities.

In addition, Murray, Yates and Shah (2018) present an overview of PwC's 2018 Essential Technologies report. The report resulted in some of the most popular technologies being used in recruitment to date. Chatbots, as mentioned earlier, have become a helpful tool as many candidate pre-selection questions can be asked via the chatbot, reducing the time constraints dramatically. Process automation assists with tasks such as advertising, reducing the cost and improving efficiency. AI and virtual reality (VR) contribute to making the TA process more effective by assisting with functions such as scanning through various talent sourcing sites and identifying potential candidates, while VR is more applicable in the candidate selection process in terms of assessing behaviour and predicting patterns of candidate reactions. Other technologies include blockchains, which improve cyber-security in data-intensive environments, and drones, which alleviate pressure on managers to keep track of task completion (Murray, Yates, & Shah, 2018).

Deloitte Insights provides an overview of forward moving steps that organisations can consider should they want to join the revolution (Volini, 2019):

- *Redefine your mission:* HR needs to define itself as being the mediator between business and people with its core intention being transformation of processes and practices while helping along the adaptation to the environmental changes and way of thinking.
- *Upgrade core technology:* As organisations move into the digital space with paperless systems, legacy systems need to be upgraded and cloud computing needs to be integrated for a sound digital infrastructure.
- *Build a digital HR team:* Creating a digitally savvy organisation begins with transitioning the organisation’s people. To do so, the HR team needs to dedicate time and teams to exploring various available digital solutions while finding ways to use AI solutions to improve recruitment and other functions in that realm.
- *Make innovation a core strategy within HR:* HR teams need to understand the business and its needs fully to push them to recreate processes based on the current environmental needs and threats.
- *Rotate younger people into the HR profession:* Replace old ways of work by allowing talent to teach each other. Create an environment where dynamic teams are regularly created to learn from one another about business and HR. Be sure to include critical thinkers from an academic perspective as well as a practical business lens.
- *Benchmark:* Remove the blinders and be willing to learn from other companies that operate within and outside the industry. Learning about other strategies could help you improve yours and expose weaknesses and strengths.

Figure 2 depicts the various applications of AI recruitment, which fall into nine major segments. This is interesting to note as it encourages the use of AI in recruitment and selection while simultaneously promoting its user-friendliness and applicability.



Figure 2: Examples of the Application of Artificial Intelligence in Recruitment (Sabel, 2019)

An important note when considering the integration and application of trends such as AI and digitalisation is that these are unlikely to ever fully replace humanistic characteristics of the recruitment process, as such factors have direct impact on the need for human interaction (Elsay, 2019), which include:

- Building and fostering relationships with talent
- True identification of candidate potential beyond online profiles
- Observing and recognising candidates' interpersonal skills
- Persuading candidates to accept offers.

Outcomes of AI may include, among others (Randstad, 2018):

- *Prediction of employee success:* AI algorithms can determine the actions, backgrounds, performance and qualifications of successful employees in the company. The information is then applied to create predictive criteria to

- search for talent in various databases that match the criteria and could potentially be successful in the organisation as well.
- *Boosting candidate engagement through AI:* The Talent Board report found that candidate experience has a profound and under-reported effect on the organisation's financial standing in terms of recruitment rates and success. To further support this report, 74% of candidates who had positive candidate experiences have increased their business relationship with the company.

One of the overall benefits of AI in recruitment is the long term return on investment in terms of time and cost saved, along with implementing a system that can function optimally, given the competitive atmosphere. The time and money saved as a result could potentially be applied to solve more complicated issues that require human creativity, emotions and other traits that cannot be replicated by AI, which again emphasises the notion of promoting 'people AND technology' instead of 'people OR technology'.

It has been found by the HBR that the primary challenge in incorporating AI is in the change management process. As a result, the integration of AI into employee processes and decision making outweighs technical AI implementation challenges. Reskilling the workforce is a critical step while organisational leaders identify the tasks that should be assigned to machines and those that should remain with the human component. The appropriate designation of primary functions needs to complete to implement programmes that allow for constant reskilling of the workforce (Moore, 2019).

2.3.2. Social Media

Social media has been defined as web-based applications that create networks between various parties for an array of purposes and allow for content to be shared (Otieno & Matoke, 2014). LinkedIn and Facebook are the social media giants in the world of recruitment and selection. These platforms allow users to create online profiles for themselves, highlighting achievements, associations and business perspectives.

Job seekers have started to make use of social media and the internet to form communities to support job searches and each other in a professional capacity. Surveyed organisations that fall within the tertiary sector have reported their attempts at recruiting professionals by using internal talent in specialised areas 65.97% of the time; 53.82% are recommendations, and job adverts on company websites had been dominant for 52.77% of the time, while various other media was used for 44.79% of the time. Other methods of recruitment include old records, random applications, notice boards and employee leasing (Bacik, Kakalejcik, & Gavurova, 2018).

Given the surge in competition among organisations for relevant talent, efficient recruitment and selection practices have taken a front seat for companies that have realised the wrath of the war for talent. Consensus has been reached on the importance and contribution made by recruitment and selection of talent, thus organisations are allocating a greater amount of resources to developing and improving their talent acquisition strategy (Tyagi, 2012).

It has been said many times, and this is something scholars and practitioners agree on, an organisation's greatest competitive advantage is its human capital. Based on the consensus, the effort put into attracting talented individuals continues to increase. As such, the internet has become one of the primary platforms that recruiters use to attract talent.

The internet has proven to be a monumental recruitment tool in recent years to track and attract qualified job candidates who may otherwise go undetected. The internet has become a platform for virtually connecting potential employees and employers.

To summarise the findings thus far, it can be said that the e-recruitment process considers every step of the recruitment transaction, including advertising jobs through to the receipt of CVs and candidate selection. The online method improves efficiency and conserves financial resources allocated to recruitment (Smith & Kidder, 2010).

Over 120 million professionals use social networks such as LinkedIn to exchange information, ideas and opportunities. Monster.com has approximately 20 000 jobseekers registering daily, and a similar number of top companies use the job board

for hiring. Staggering statistics such as this paint a picture of the radical change the internet has brought thus far (Doherty, 2010).

It may be argued that popular trends do not necessarily solely include practices such as AI successful companies are also leaning toward the trend of low-cost practices that enable talent advisors to function more efficiently. The resultant efficiency could be from using basic techniques and tailoring these to each business units' needs and specifications. An organisation's choice of selection and recruitment tools are dependent on many factors, most importantly the cost of current recruitment practices and the success rates.

Additionally, recruitment is not an isolated function but should rather be considered a crucial segment of organisational functioning and the TM process. Business leaders are readily realising the impact of failed hires and out-dated recruitment practices therefore striving to contribute a greater deal of resources and thought to the TA process. Practices such as the use of social media can be used for sourcing, attracting talent through branding as well as communicating the organisational strategy.

Deshati (2017) noted perspectives from an array of authors. There are several authors that have researched the use of social media in the recruitment process. Blacksmith and Poeppelman (2014), state that "Social media sites are no longer just a place to keep in touch with friends and family. They have entered the workspace and are influencing the way recruitment and hiring is implemented" (p. 114). Hauptmann and Steger (2013) emphasise that "In terms of professional work, social media can be said to be relatively easy and inexpensive to introduce. Social media can be especially helpful to Human Resources Management when it comes to facilitating personnel recruitment, promoting learning processes on an individual, team and organisational level" (p. 29).

Further emphasis on the growth in use of social networking in recruitment can be seen in the statistics:

- Facebook: 1.32 billion daily active users in June 2017 (Facebook, 2017), of which more than 14 million users were South African (2OceansVibe, 2016; Business Tech, 2016).

- LinkedIn: 467 million members in 2017 (Chaudhary, 2017), of which 5.5 million users were from South Africa (2OceansVibe, 2016).

The uniqueness of social media recruiting is embedded in its ability to entice talent that is passive and semi-passive. By doing so, recruiters create and expand their talent pools. Also, active talent is easily contacted, and the recruitment process is swifter than it would be conventionally. Seeing as lengthy recruitment processes are one of the primary reasons that candidates opt for competing organisations, using social media to create a speedy process is certainly advantageous. Apart from gaining obvious competitive advantage by making full use of social media in talent acquisition (Singh & Sharma, 2014), it provides greater effectiveness on an overall basis for the business. Jobvite (2014) found that 93% of recruiters utilise social networking sites in support of their efforts.

In their endeavour to determine which social media platforms are ranked the highest in terms of usability and successful recruitment rates, LinkedIn is used to post twice as many job advertisements as Facebook and Twitter. Additionally, more than 95% of recruiters who utilise social networks for talent acquisition report that they prefer and only use LinkedIn (Bullhorn, 2014), whereas Facebook has a 66% usage rate with Twitter at 52% (Jobvite, 2014). The value seen in LinkedIn is further stressed, based on the statistics provided by Houran (2017):

- 87% of senior management is sourced from LinkedIn
- 80% of middle management is sourced from LinkedIn.

Koch, Gerber and de Klerk (2018) set out to discover the impact of social media on recruitment in South Africa, and their results uncovered that within their sample of 12 recruiters from four different agencies, LinkedIn is primarily used for candidate search, and it is widely used for advertising, and was used by all recruiters. Further, other social media platforms had taken over as traditional job advertising is moving to electronic advertising. Competition for candidates remains with the use of social media and the seniority of a position dictates the way social media is used in recruitment.

Brown and Vaughn (2011) mentioned that as a screening tool, social media tools “provide a readily available public forum to research candidates while incurring minimal cost, allowing even small businesses to engage in such practices ... Potential employers may have access to detailed information that would allow them to draw conclusions or make inferences about the applicant’s character or personality that might not be as easily or economically obtained through traditional means” (p. 219).

The benefits of using social networking sites in the talent acquisition process can be realised in terms of cost savings of job advertisement listings, access to high quality candidates, ability to build talent pools more easily, fostering realistic expectations in terms of being able to keep constant contact with candidates, improving external communications regarding the branding efforts and creating succinct communication broadcasts.

Concerns of making use of social media as a recruitment tool include exclusion factors, for example, if candidates do not have access to resources such as LinkedIn, the accuracy of information displayed by potential recruits, errors in communications relayed by the organisations and, last but not least, ensuring diversity standards are met as opposed to solely sourcing talent based on skills and qualifications (Broughton, Foley, Ledermaier, & Cox, 2013).

The use of social networking websites such as LinkedIn and Facebook have grown rapidly in the personnel recruitment space. In 2009, for example, the United States Postal Services hired 19 people using such sites; in 2014, it hired 24 475 individuals (Breaugh, 2014). Special attention is paid to LinkedIn as it is seen as an exclusive site that is used predominantly to connect with fellow professionals and be found by recruiters (Koch, Gerber, & de Klerk, 2018).

Appendix A provides a brief description of the various differentiating factors between conventional recruitment methods and social media-based recruitment. The observations noted by Dutta (2014) include factors such as the objective of each recruitment type, channels of communication, metrics of measure, locus of control, level of individualisation, target applicant group and tenure of engagement.

The impact of the recruitment trends noted may be attributed to the fact that they are predominantly technology-based. Technology has changed business functioning and processes, recruitment being one of the primary areas affected (Sharma & Nagendra, 2017).

Digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence and Social Media have allowed recruitment agents to attract and acquire candidates through multiple channels and maintain relationships like before. According to the Statistica Report, it was estimated that in 2018 there would be around 283 million social network users in India, significantly up from 216.5 million in 2016.

Further noted, 86% of the working population in their first decade of employment use social media to search for jobs and research employers (Rohampton, 2017). Organisations are maximising on the opportunity presented to brand them and increase their online presence.

Social media may be connected to employer branding and digitalisation as an acquisition tool therefore it is highly flexible in its function and should be used with caution to prevent the violation of candidate privacy and employer bias (Madia, 2011).

2.2.3. Employer Branding

The well-known term 'The War for Talent', as referred to by Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001), involves efforts surrounding employer branding as a key strategy in winning the war. It can be argued that employer branding has been recognised as a strategy for acquiring talent prior although it has only recently been found to add greater value than it has in previous years.

Recruitment strategies have a world of advantages because these guide recruitment practices that subsequently lead to skilful talent acquisition and enhanced organisational performance (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

By improving recruitment results and reducing the cost thereof, favourable employer branding has been aptly defined as building a reputation and creating an image of the

organisation as a highly rated employer of choice (Ewing, Pitt, De Bussy, & Berthon, 2004). This may be perceived as similar to that of product branding where customers are attracted to the brand based on the various product offerings and brand reputation. Branding may be further described as a group effort required by all organisational members, not just HR or the recruiting managers. It is everyone's responsibility to relay the organisational branding mission with regards to its value proposition in terms of culture, service offering, and staff benefits alike (Bugg, 2015).

Once the personality of the company has been adequately and consistently broadcast, the intention is always to be the employer of choice so that the required talent chooses them as opposed to competitors. Seeing as social media updates are most likely to be recognised by candidates, staff are encouraged to display the company's brand appropriately wherever possible. The crafting and promotion of the organisation's uniqueness at every opportunity is the most probable tactic to build the highest quality talent pool (Bugg, 2015).

Additionally, Herman and Gioia (2001) states the outcomes of strong branding include those of a beneficial psychological and sociological nature. These were named 'added values' that emphasised the clients' expectations of receiving benefits that were relayed through the values of the brand. More so, for the brand strategy to succeed, there need to be minimal gaps between the brand offering and the consumers' perception of the offering (where the client becomes prospective employees).

According to LinkedIn's Talent Blog, 44% of employers intend on investing more in their employer branding strategies to acquire the desired talent. Recruitment expert Ed Nathanson emphasises that the trick to maintaining a strong employer brand is to put in the effort to create a long-lasting, sustainable brand image where existing employees become brand ambassadors (Anderson, 2018). It may be concluded that with the additional effort and resources placed on employer branding, employers are more cognisant of the impacts on their talent acquisition practices.

Employer branding can influence the image relayed to candidates positively or negatively as the image relayed can be the primary determinant of whether candidates

choose to consider the organisation or not. This is applicable to candidates across the spectrum of experience, including entry level candidates through to executives. Promoting an employer brand that is authentic and reiterates the values for which the organisation stands and encourages its existing employees to uphold is critical to persuading passive and active applicants.

The company's brand provides a plethora of information that may include the functional, psychological and economic benefits offered to employees. These are defined as Employer Value Proposition (EVP). Differentiating the EVP allows the company to segment its talent pool and cater to each segment accordingly. As a result, the organisation creates its own competitive advantage based on its ability to promote unique experiences for successful applicants and become an employer of choice.

Endorsing the organisation's philosophy, communication, strengths and internal culture on a public platform announces its mission and vision on a practical level. This is possible on social and digitised platforms such as LinkedIn and other sites that are closely monitored by candidates, whether they are in the job market. Congruence between the messages relayed externally and internally is imperative for acquisition as well as retention of talent. The organisation must cater for their employees and candidates as if they are business clients. Once an organisation can achieve internal and external brand congruence, it is well on its way to accomplishing a successful branding strategy for talent acquisition.

According to South Africa's widest HR Recruitment Trend Survey, conducted annually, the 2018/2019 results reflect the shift in strategy to attract talent that revolved around the diversification in employees, employer branding, digital transformation and automated software solutions. Despite the epidemic of skills shortages in South Africa, employers are maintaining talent acquisition as one of their highest priorities. The survey was conducted on 1 070 HR professionals from various organisations across SA that operate in several different industries, each of which varies in size. This allowed for more diversification in the sample and represented a reliable set of trends. The survey was conducted by one of South Africa's leading distributors of HR software, MCI Consulting.

The results of the survey further emphasise that companies experience greater achievement in attracting and sourcing talent if the organisation is well branded and has a strong image in the market. In addition, to Rhandawa (2017) and many other literary sources, the survey further mentions the upped use of social media, especially LinkedIn as the preferred source of online recruitment, in addition to various job portals such as Career Junction, PNet, Careers24 and company career portals.

In summary, the South African Recruitment Trend Survey 2018/2019 yielded the following results noted in Figure 3:



Figure 3: Summary of South African Recruitment Trend Survey 2018/2019 (Professional Sourcing, 2019)

Employer branding of its workplace culture, atmosphere and innovations are key to attracting talent that will most likely be aligned to the company's objectives and pace of innovation. The intention of branding is to achieve return on investment from the initiatives put in place to create an attractive brand to relay the various benefits of being a supporter as an employee. Important to keep in mind when branding an organisation whether it is on the company's LinkedIn page, careers website or employees' personal pages, is to maintain consistency of the content displayed. This

is imperative to ensure that potential candidates receive what is being put out there (Mosley, 2014).

Lastly, Gatherer and Craig (2013) maintain that as an individual, the more aware one is of their strengths, weaknesses and preferences, the effective one can be in addressing potential gaps and reinforcing the brand. This is highly applicable to organisational branding in that the more effective organisations are in reiterating their strengths, the title of employer of choice is more likely theirs. Furthermore, detailed branding and promotion is bound to result in employees becoming brand ambassadors and relaying deeper meaning to the workplace mind-set and way of work (Li & Bryan, 2010).

2.3.4. Internet Screening

According to Hoek, O'Kane, and McCracken (2016), incumbent seekers are more often being encouraged to follow stricter procedures to increase effectiveness and efficiency when screening potential candidates. This is especially applicable to those who are targeted for key roles.

To achieve best fit and maintain best practice standards, the employer may find it necessary to go the extra mile by incorporating internet screening into the beginning phases of the initial talent acquisition process. Internet screening may be an eligible option for organisations where the targeted talent is for high priority roles and scarce skills roles. The primary intention of internet screening includes obtaining relevant information on applicants' career backgrounds, competencies acquired, personality attributes and potential for successful future performance (Jeske & Schultz, 2016).

Internet screening is used by employers as a cheap and fast alternative to gain information about their potential employees. There are numerous forms of internet screening sources: those that feature in the present study include internet search engines, social networking sites and professional websites (Kluemper, 2013). According to Hoek and O'Kane (2015) employers are more likely to gain efficient momentum should they follow systematic procedures to effectively screen candidates.

and gain relevant information on their work history, skills and attributes, personality and predicted future performance.

Firstly, internet search engines, which may include Google and others, can be used to find information about job candidates that is available to the public, such as previous employers and organisations, social and community responsibility efforts, and news reports about candidates (Kluemper, 2013).

Secondly, social networking websites can be described as platforms where individuals choose post information about themselves personally and professionally. Social networking sites have become one of the leading communications and sharing platforms on which individual define themselves. Statistics from Statistica (2015) indicate an estimated 1.96 billion people actively use social media worldwide which is an accurate representation of the impact employers could make with branding but also the opportunities presented from an acquisition perspective. This includes Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, as well as other important social networks and communication such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Google+, Skype and Instagram (Jeske & Shultz, 2016). It may be concluded that employers are actively branding themselves and creating online relationships with their active and passive candidates on the various social networks to gain traction in the world of social media recruitment and selection.

Social media platforms also facilitate and encourage communication between diverse ranges of people. Therefore, the barriers between one's private and public domains are brought down by the social media context (Jeske & Shultz, 2016).

Thirdly, internet screening may include sources that are more professionally aimed such as LinkedIn, which is primarily focused on professionals. This allows individuals to create a profile that be an electronic curriculum vitae containing information about their educational history, career goals, and current organisation. In addition, LinkedIn has functionality which creates online groups for a variety of professions that people can join to link to other professionals within a common area thus encouraging networking and brand promotion (Davison, Marais, Hamilton & Bing, 2012).

Brown and Vaughn (2011) suggest the use of internet screening is inevitable and should be embraced reiterating the views and evidence brought forward by the preceding discussion.

2.3.5. Computer Adaptive Testing

Computerised Adaptive Testing applies predictive algorithms to shorten the test without sacrificing accuracy. Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT) is a recently assumed method used for pre-employment testing as part of the selection process (Scott, Bartram, & Reynolds, 2017). In comparison to traditional pen-and-pencil standardised tests, CAT is designed to adapt to a student's ability level (Shapiro & Gebhardt, 2012). These authors go on to say that this is achieved through refining the item selection process based on the student's response and providing a mechanism for identifying the abilities and potential problem areas within the assessment domain. CATs are designed to measure candidate characteristics which can assist in the TM process in terms of succession planning and development of employees (Kantrowitz, Dawson, & Fetzer, 2011).

It is important to consider the maturity of CAT in the South African context with some concern being placed on the accuracy of results and honesty of candidates. Therefore, some of these tests have been limited to use in controlled and proctored testing environment. Although, the increasing need for unproctored internet testing (UIT) for selection has resulted in the growth of recognition of CAT-based versions of assessments as opposed to those traditionally used in the acquisition of talent (Domínguez, López-Cuadrado, Armendariz, Jaime, Heras, & Pérez, 2019).

Likewise, due to the increase of access to technology and internet connection there has been more leeway for the advancement of the viability of UIT, which has in turn promoted the probability of usage of CAT in talent acquisition. UIT is used to verify candidates' test results and ensure that there is consistency and absence of cheating in unsupervised testing situations (Makransky & Glas, 2011). Although CAT uses sophisticated algorithms and large item banks to operate, there is increased availability of the required resources readily available to complete CAT tests.

Furthermore, due to the introduction of UIT, the need for testing centres is no longer required to the degree as it used to be (Kantrowitz, Dawson, & Fetzer, 2011).

CATs are suitable in the quest to improve talent acquisition as they are designed to measure various characteristics that are predictive of employee performance. The predictive trait of CATs is highly applicable in TM as it assists with succession and developmental planning of key role players (Shapiro & Gebhardt, 2012).

2.3.6. Mobile Testing

Mobile testing can be understood to be mobile versions of talent acquisition assessments. Instead of applicants having to come into an assessment centre, psychometric tests can be sent via mobile devices for ease of access and convenience. Mobile tests may include the assessment of cognitive ability, situational judgment, multimedia work simulations (Morelli, Mahan, & Illingworth, 2014), personality traits and general mental ability (Arthur, Doverspike, Muñoz, Taylor, & Carr, 2014). This trend has gained momentum due to the increased use of technology, desire for convenience and slim-line candidate experience (Morelli, Mahan, & Illingworth, 2014).

Mobile testing has a minimum impact on the type of tests companies can administer as such personality and general mental ability tests along with cognitive and situational judgement tests can be conducted on a mobile platform (Arthur, Doverspike, Muñoz, Taylor, & Carr, 2014).

As consumers have exponentially adopted devices in the recent years such as computers and smartphones, companies strive to identify opportunities for modification and development of psychometric assessments to maximise and leverage off these technologies for TA. According to a 2014 survey, roughly 81% of organisations reported using online assessments (Kantrowitz, 2014). This trend is taking over the traditional use of assessment centres by allowing candidates to complete psychometric tests at their own convenience, adding to the employer's overall value proposition.

In 2014, approximately 43% of HR professionals indicated that they would prefer mobile testing for assessments (Kantrowitz, 2014). As a result of increased application, companies have begun making their assessments available for completion on mobile devices. Candidates are more likely to progress with a company which can convey ease of access and convenience from the early stages of talent acquisition. The demand amongst organisations for mobile testing has continued to increase due to improved accessibility and positive candidate experience feedback (LaPort, Huynh, Stemer, Ryer, & Moretti, 2016).

2.4. Impacts of Talent Acquisition Tools and Techniques on Organisations

The impacts conveyed from the trending talent acquisition tools and techniques discussed are referred to below. Positive and negative impacts are included in the subsequent points.

2.4.1. Positive Impacts

One of the most beneficial outcomes for organisations from the use of trending TA tools and techniques may include higher profitability and larger applicant pool size (Fernández-Aráoz, Groyberg, & Nohria, 2009) hence, with reference to the increased emphasis on ensuring successful recruitment and selection, there has been an amplified degree of sophistication in talent acquisition techniques and tools.

Additionally, employers may be able to gain access to otherwise unobtainable information through social network sites about their applicants. Some employers state that information on social media enables them to verify information and reveal hidden truths (Abraham, Kaliannan, Mohan & Thomas, 2015).

When the fuel giant Shell Oil Company digitised its recruitment, Lam and Hawkes (2017) reported the various benefits to be considered. These include an optimised assessment process using video interviews, better candidate experience through an efficient, convenient application process, cost reduction from lowered use of conventional assessments. The digitised components of the acquisition process allow

employers to streamline the process whilst gaining from the improved quality of candidates shortlisted. More so, cost reduction is mostly seen from steps in the process which now take less time as opposed to conventional functioning. Most importantly, the candidate experience component is focused on as process steps such as job applications and assessments are increasingly being digitised.

Employer branding as an acquisition strategy has shown great promise in the recent years. Online job adverts can be customised to include the company's brand to prospective job seekers. An aspect of branding as simple as the company description can determine whether a job seeker chooses to apply to a certain organisation or not (Kaur, 2015). When building an employer brand, Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) emphasise that when employer branding is adequately attended to, benefits reaped could include competitive advantage over industry giants, enhanced talent pipeline, greater workforce diversity, stronger corporate culture and increased support for the organisation by aspiring employees and stakeholders.

Moreover, the cost of advertising roles is significantly less as companies use their careers websites in conjunction with some of the most popular online careers sites such as LinkedIn and Careers24. Along with the reduced cost of advertising, the applicant intake is significantly higher, returning the investments made in advertising (Kaur, 2015).

Also, fit within a company is a crucial concern when making staffing decisions and may lengthen the selection process. Internet screening could serve as a useful tool to reduce the time allocated to determining the fit between the company and applicant. Staffing professionals typically seek information about additional characteristics such as similarity in values, norms and morals of the applicant (Davison, Maraist, Hamilton, & Bing, 2012). Additionally, e-recruitment allows applications 24/7 until the deadline of the advertisements. The process is user-friendly for the recruiter and the applicant as recruiters can post and customise roles at their leisure and applicants are able to apply immediately. The entire recruitment process is fast-tracked from the posting of the advertisement to filtering through CVs (Kaur, 2015).

In terms of selection, the use of CAT-based cognitive ability testing presents several practical benefits. These may include dynamic presentation of items due to their variety and use of multimedia. Additionally, CAT-based tests have reduced on-site testing time as these tests tailor themselves to the ability level of the examinee and can arrive at an accurate score using fewer items. Further, these tests have improved measurement precision across all ability levels, with reduced worry of cheating, as every examinee receives a unique set of items (Kantrowitz, Dawson & Fetzler, 2011). The increase in the proportion of knowledge workers has led organisations to find better ways of screening job applicants for specific role requirements. The benefits of CAT for cognitive ability assessments are equally applicable to knowledge testing, and may even be more appropriate, given the fact that many organisations usually use multiple knowledge tests during the selection process, especially for jobs that require specific skills (Kantrowitz, Dawson, & Fetzler, 2011).

Finally, aspects such as candidate experience are true indicators of the successfulness of an organisation's talent acquisition practices. In this case, candidate experience may be affected by technology usability, which is the candidates' impression of the application tracking system used by the organisation, their perception of the technical complexity of the company website and career page, and the extent to which the company has provided mediums to engage with candidates (Cober, Brown, Keeping, & Levy, 2004). Cober et al. (2004) further imply that candidates' overall impression of the organisation's online presence ultimately contributes to the level of attraction and probability of application to the company.

2.4.2. Negative Impacts

Although there may be plenty of advantages to using e-selection tools, there are legal and ethical issues for practitioners to consider ensuring safe practice. Such issues include privacy and discrimination, where practitioners need to take into consideration various laws concerning invading applicant privacy online and potentially unfairly discriminating against individuals based on their online profiles (McCarthy et al., 2017). Further, remotely delivered assessments are not without their weaknesses and disadvantages; possible issues faced may include underrepresentation of low

socioeconomic status applicants, and applicants who are unfamiliar with the technology may score worse than they should. These tests may also be susceptible to additional malfeasant applicant behaviour (Arthur et al., 2014).

According to Kaur (2015), the drawbacks of using an e-recruitment system could include poorly constructed vacancy advertisements due to an over-reliance on the recruitment management system, which could lead to legal consequences. Also, the vast array of applications received could result in poor quality screening of CVs, essentially neglecting a better part of the talent pool. A fair drawback to consider, especially for organisations which conduct mass recruitment, is the removal of outdated advertisements to prevent applicants being misled.

2.5. Best Practices and Policies

Due to the many concerns raised in literature regarding the use of talent acquisition tools and techniques, best practices and policies have been suggested for responsible use of these:

- *Use of multiple screeners*: To improve reliability and validity of internet screening, it is suggested that multiple screeners are used (Kluemper 2013).
- *Outsource or insource*: CV evaluators who are within the HR function could be tasked to determine and eliminate job-irrelevant information before handing over candidates' information to hiring managers. This may also prevent a future legal liability of negligent hiring or discriminatory hiring as the vetting process would be more rigorous (Slovensky & Ross, 2012).
- *Discourage covert tactics*: CV screening procedures should be part of a formal policy rather than encouraging engaging in practices that are not upfront such as improper consideration due to stringent deadlines or unskilled screeners being tasked with screening (Kluemper, 2013).
- *Accuracy*: Verify the accuracy of information obtained from internet screening media through other sources, such as contacting applicant references and previous employers (Kluemper, 2013).
- *Transparency*: Disclose the potential use of internet screening media for selection decisions to applicants: securing the applicant's formal permission

to search should be a standard requirement of application materials if internet screening is anticipated, to avoid negative applicant perceptions due to feelings of privacy invasion and secretiveness (Kluemper, 2013).

- *Mobile testing*: Regarding mobile internet testing, assessment type and assessment length may be important considerations in decisions regarding adopting or offering a mobile assessment option (King, Ryan, Kantrowitz, Grelle, & Dainis, 2015).
- *Social media*: Madia (2011) maintains best practices for the use of social media as a recruitment tool include ensuring the corporate career site is technically equipped to handle additional volume resultant from extending the recruitment effort. More so, the TA function must be able to cope comfortably with the expectations of engagement from candidates and interested parties. Applicants expect a greater deal of engagement on social media platforms which means that the TA team should have dedicated resources to meet those needs. In addition, the company's social media presence needs to relay an image of forward thinking, corporate culture, relevant content. This is bound to attract the desired talent and ideally lead to acquisition or talent pipeline building (Madia, 2011).
- Kaur (2015) mentions various criteria that will assist with effective recruitment especially for organisations which make use of social media platforms. These include selecting job sites and recruitment agencies based on stringent criteria to vet the most credible resources. Further, organisations should take extra precaution when posting job adverts online to avoid any bias or discrimination in the context. Furthermore, consideration must be taken into account concerning the impact of supplying remuneration details as this could be adjusted depending on various factors. Lastly, continuously update the recruitment process to adjust to environmental changes and demands.

2.6. Conclusion

As prevalent in the literature review, recruitment and selection practices are no longer conducted in isolation but rather as critical components in the talent management process, namely, talent acquisition. More so, talent acquisition has come a long way

from formerly being done 100% manually to moving toward automating operational tasks. More so, a greater number of process steps are being digitised to enhance candidate experiences and improve the TA process in entirety. Finally, the increased implementation of the abovementioned trends are becoming more viable for many companies, but it is important for TA personnel to be cognisant of the best practices applicable and to shape systems to match their unique needs and capabilities.

In Chapter 3, the detailed methodology of how the field research was conducted will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Chapter 3 intends to explore the research methodology of which was applied to conduct the empirical research for this study. The chapter explores the research design, data analysis, collection, research and ethics and additional components of the research process.

The present study was conducted from an interpretive paradigm perspective, on which data collection efforts were based. According to Smith and Osborn (2004), the interpretive approach allows the researcher to discover how participants perceive a given phenomenon and it is their perceptions that are then interpreted and reported on in the form of multiple case studies. This research endeavour presents multiple case studies based on the participating organisations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted on the sample group of respondents to collect the necessary data, a method that is further discussed in this chapter.

3.2. Research Paradigm

The present research is intended to contribute primarily to the Industrial and Organisational Psychology and Human Resources Management fields. Other fields which may benefit from the results of this study include Information Technology, Marketing and Communications. The researcher intends basing inferences on various sources of literary information. This will be achieved by synthesising the literature and drawing further conclusions from empirical data to enhance the quality of the study.

Methodological paradigm: Qualitative method.

Epistemological paradigm: The researcher used an interpretive approach as the research objectives were based on the perceived trends in talent acquisition tools and techniques. The essence of the interpretive paradigm lies in collection and interpretation of data by drawing inferences and making possible judgements (Schommer-Aikins, 2002). This approach is best suited as the trends were deduced from the qualitative surveys which provided subjective standpoints, alongside the

collected literature. Together, the sources of data were collected and interpreted using the interpretive approach.

3.3. Research Design

The case study methodology was ideal for reporting evidence-based scenarios to inform professional practice on various subjects studied by using a variety of data sources (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Due to the flexibility and rigour that can be achieved through case study methodology, the researcher was able to explore organisations and individuals operating in complex environments. Practically applied, the cases in this body of research are based on various organisations and participants. Case studies allowed the researcher to thoroughly analyse the evidence retrieved through the deconstruction of raw data for further scrutiny and investigation. Thereafter, the data was thoughtfully reconstructed to provide an in-depth perspective of the phenomenon under inquiry.

Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) have constructed significant approaches to directing case study methodology, both of which are worth mentioning. Both authors have based their direction on case studies in the constructivist paradigm, which claims that the truth is socially constructed and primarily based on an individual's subjective perception.

The constructivist approach is advantageous and applied by both Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) because it enables rapport between the researcher and participant without disrupting or distorting the story being told (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) and requires open-ended questions to gain insight and description into participants' experiences (Hussein, Hirst, Salyers, & Osuji, 2014). In this instance, the constructivist stance was evident when interviewing respondents, with some displaying initial apprehension to the transparency required. Evident in the raw data collection phase was that the participants from each organisation varied in years of experience and roles, widening the spectrum of responses.

Yin (2003) suggests that case study design be the applied study design when the primary aim of the research inquiry is to answer queries around 'how' and 'why'; the

behaviour of those participating in the study cannot be manipulated; contextual conditions of the phenomenon are relative to the study, and the boundaries between the context and phenomenon are unclear.

Often, researchers attempt case studies that are too broadly based or have a multitude of inquiries that make them invalid at the end. In order to bind the case and make it value-adding, Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) have determined certain boundaries that may guide the researcher in ensuring there is thick description and plenty of evidence by applying constraints in terms of time and place (Creswell, 2003), time and activity (Stake, 1995) and definition of context (Huberman & Miles, 1994). For example, the present inquiry has been restricted by applying boundaries relative to the participants' job roles, the number of participants from each organisation, the industry in which the organisations operate, the cities in which the participating companies are to be found, and the data collection tool and time frame in which the data was collected.

Once the researcher has decided that the case study methodology will be the best to explore and present the research findings, and boundaries have been aligned, the type of case study must be chosen. Yin (2003) notes types of cases such as explanatory, and exploratory and descriptive, whereas Stake (1995) lists options such as multiple-cases, and intrinsic, instrumental and collective cases. Notably, the choice of case type ultimately depends on the overall objective of the study. The present body of research presented multiple case studies based on Organisation A, B and C that are all descriptive in nature.

Given that the type of case study has been decided upon along with the boundaries, the researcher must make the decision as to whether there will be a single case study or multiple case studies. Multiple case studies are used to understand the phenomenon in each environment and across environments. In this instance, cases are examined to identify differences and similarities, creating an overall robust and reliable product (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Essentially, the type of case study chosen is based on maximising the learning in the period allocated to the data collection.

The unit of analysis in the case is reliant on the issues or components of the research topic. It is crucial to realise and remain within the primary scope of the study as well

as its time frame. In the present case studies, the unit of analysis is the individual participants.

By considering Yin (2003) and Stake's (1995) contributions to the case study methodology, the overall process of developing a reputable case study can be summarised, as seen below in Figure 4.

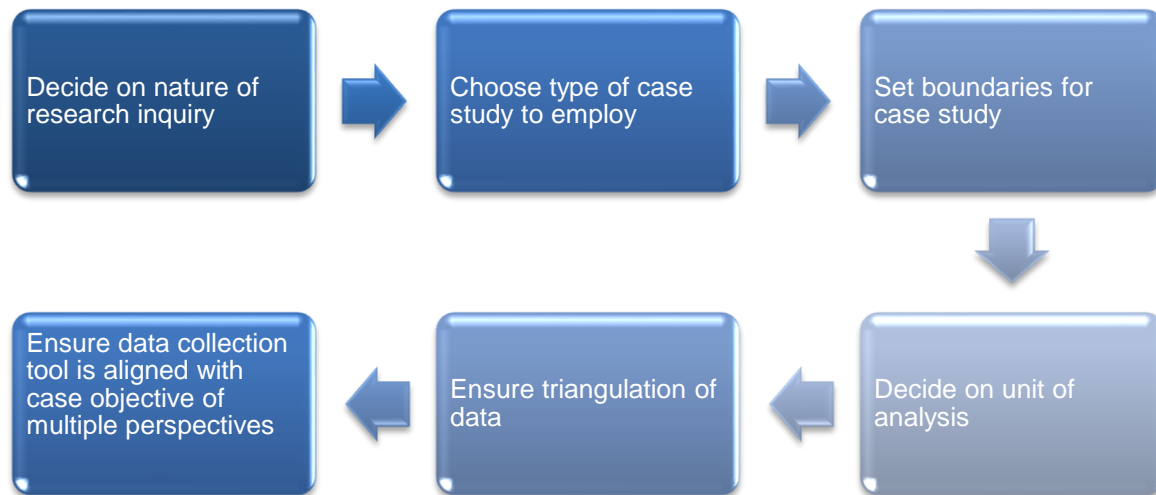


Figure 4: Summarised Process of Developing a Reputable Case Study (Yin, 2003; Stake, 1995)

3.4. Preparation for the Research

The method of deciding on the sample group is discussed in detail, inclusive of the sampling method and the various impacts on the data collection.

As the researcher prepared to conduct the empirical research on the sample, it appeared crucial to obtain the necessary permission from the University of Pretoria as well as from the intended sample. Obtaining permission added to the researcher's credibility as this meant that the data collected could be used for the current research and the participants were fully aware of the nature of the research.

3.4.1. Sampling

To provide valuable and appropriate information to readers, the researcher's endeavour was to access the most diverse sample as possible. This allowed for variation in perceptions and broadened the knowledge currently available on talent acquisition tools. The sample therefore included males and females in various portfolios from varied operational areas.

By considering the need to ensure diversity in the sample group, the researcher made use of a purposive sampling approach. As the name indicates, this sampling technique was used to select participants based on the purpose of the study as posed by the research questions. Much as qualitative research leans towards perceptions and subjective experiences, purposive sampling is reliant on the researcher's subjective choice of sample. Purposive sampling has been noted to allow the researcher to justify and apply generalisations as deduced from the sample data. More so, purposive sampling techniques may be used in conjunction with one another, each building upon the preceding technique (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Although, purposive sampling may be highly prone to researcher bias, but this is avoidable to an extent, given that a clear criterion is formed prior to beginning the research. Additionally, it may prove challenging for the researcher to convince readers of the generalisations, given that the sample selected is based on the researcher's judgement (Sharma & Nagendra, 2017). In this case, the criterion includes items such as participants' level of experience in the talent management space, and the degree of use of TA tools apart from interviews, and knowledge of TA tools used by the organisation. The contrasting facts are considered when compiling the study to ensure it indeed meets the necessary requirements of reliability and validity.

Teddlie and Yu (2007) mention typical characteristics of purposive sampling that further substantiate its value to this study. Substantiating characteristics includes the endeavour to account for generalisability of the finding, a sample that is selected to address a specific case, and the focus on narrative data.

According to Acharya (2013) and colleagues, a sample is a representative subset of a population that will allow the researcher to make informed, valid and reliable inferences from the data. By making use of a reasonably-sized sample, the

researcher's costs are trimmed tremendously in terms of time and physical manpower required to code, analyse and report the data. Sample representativeness is dependent on sampling methodology, the size of the sample, and the rate of the responses (Lavrakas, 2008).

There are two mainstream types of sampling, namely, probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability samples can ensure generalisability of the study results to the intended audience. This entails allowing each participant in the sample to be given an equal chance of being chosen to participate (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The current research inquiry has employed the non-probability options of purposive sampling, which entails choosing a sample group based on the study purpose and snowball sampling, which entails approaching additional respondents based on the information provided by initial participants (Daniel, 2012).

The sample group used was based on accessibility of participants who met the inclusion criteria of being directly involved in the talent acquisition process. It so happened that the initial participating organisations functioned within the same industry of insurance and provided details that were used to contact the remaining participants. By conducting the qualitative surveys on organisations that offer similar services, the researcher had the opportunity to make generalisations and comparisons of results.

More specifically, a heterogeneous purposive approach was applied, seeing as the aim is to provide a broad range of diversified content. The heterogeneous or maximum variation sampling method encourages the researcher to select participants from a broader spectrum. Thus, optimal understanding is achieved on the topic (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

Although a noteworthy disadvantage of purposive sampling is that it is highly prone to researcher bias, this is avoidable to an extent, given that a clear criterion is formed prior to the research commencement. Additionally, it may prove challenging for the researcher to convince readers of the generalisations given that the sample selected is based on the researcher's judgement and convenience (Sharma, 2017). In this case, the criteria include items such as participants' level of experience in the talent

management space, degree of use of talent acquisition tools and knowledge of TA tools used by the organisation.

The contrasting facts are to be considered when compiling the study to ensure it indeed meets the necessary ethical research requirements to be found reliable and valid.

The sample group in this study includes between four and seven participants from each organisation. A case study was formed based on each organisation, discussing the primary themes as based on the data collected and linked to the research questions. Further, a comparison between various practices in each case is depicted. The sample includes three organisations that all function within the insurance industry, each of varying sizes, client bases and advance in Talent Management. This allowed for variation in the data collected as the variance in perspectives was achieved through interviewing operational managers who were highly involved in their recruitment process, as well as Human Resources Management personnel directly linked to the talent acquisition efforts of the company.

The interview data was collected from a sample size of 14 individuals. The participants had a minimum of five years of experience in their specific field of expertise, making the sample highly qualified and knowledgeable on the topic of talent acquisition. The operational management sample was based primarily in the Information Technology sections of each organisation, whereas the Human Resources personnel interviewed operated in a business unit as well as for shared services.

Appendix B provides a brief outline of the sample's participant details in terms of their roles, years of experience and gender, providing greater context for the case studies' content.

3.4.2. Permission

Permission was requested from the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria to conduct the relevant research on organisations and participants at the researcher's discretion, which was granted.

The participants who formed the sample group were approached via email explaining the purpose of the research, the institution and information explaining the endeavour. The introductory email may be found in Appendix F.

More so, each participant signed a consent form to protect the organisations' privacy, the consent form can be found in Appendix E. Thereafter, the relevant participants from each organisation were informed via email and in person regarding the interview schedule and necessary consent form to begin the data collection process. The researcher obtained the consent forms from most of the selected participants and made the necessary arrangements to administer the interviews.

The interviews conducted were then used to construct a case narrative on each organisation, based on the information gathered from each participant on their talent acquisition practices and experiences. The case narratives included content that pertained to the interview responses and was relevant to the primary and secondary research questions.

3.5. Data Collection Process

The data collection process as discussed below provides insight into the method which the researcher followed to collect empirical data whilst maintaining the highest possible standards for quality and ethical considerations.

3.5.1. Data Collection

Literary data collection was completed by applying a range of combinations of key words for finding relevant and applicable information. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

are also used to help the researcher decide whether the information collected best answers the research questions while avoiding unnecessary deviations.

Further, survey data was collected by way of qualitative surveys. According to Sofaer (1999), qualitative surveys are ideal for research endeavours that need to be prompt, economical and maintain anonymity while gathering substantial data. The surveys were conducted on experienced Talent Advisory personnel as well as operational management who have been exposed to talent acquisition tools and techniques.

The surveys were conducted using a semi-structured interview format as this allowed conversational-type data collection, allowing for exploration of participants' perceptions (Barriball & While, 1994). Each interview took approximately 45 minutes, catering for any interruptions or unplanned occurrences. In addition, the semi-structured format ensured a form of standardisation as the sample group was diversified. By applying a semi-structured interview approach to the surveys, participants were expected to more likely reveal information that truly added value and substance to the overall research quest. The interviews were conducted by the researcher while audio recording responses once consent had been given by the participant. The interview questions and format can be reviewed in Appendix C.

The drafted data collection instrument included the following core items along with the basic biographical items of the participant, as well as the consent form and introduction:

- Organisation's client base
- Organisation's historical background
- Current talent acquisition tools and techniques used by the organisation
- The participants were not compensated for the participation as this is voluntary.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format as this allowed a conversational atmosphere and paved the way for exploration of participants' perceptions. Luo and Wildemuth (2009) explain semi-structured interviews as a balance where the researcher conducts a guided conversation using an interview

schedule but has the autonomy to allow for leeway in each individual interview. The present research reported that each interview lasted an average of 20 minutes catering for any interruptions or unplanned occurrences. In addition, the semi-structured format ensured a form of standardisation as the sample group was diversified. Applying a semi-structured approach to the interviews, participants were more likely to divulge information that added value and substance to the overall research quest. The interviews were conducted by the researcher while audio recording responses. Signed consent was obtained by way of a consent form provided to the participant by the researcher to uphold ethical standards and reassure the participant that full confidentiality would be maintained.

Participants were approached using the snowballing method in addition to the researcher's decision to use highly ranked employers in the insurance industry. The initial approach was to contact HR and IOP consultancies that had long standing relationships with the Department of HR at the University of Pretoria. Unfortunately, due to time restraints and lack of potential participants' responses, it was decided to approach organisations in which the researcher had direct contacts. Most participants were sent an introductory email pertaining to the purpose of the interviews and nature of the study.

The individual participants were chosen based on their level of expertise and role within the businesses. The researcher then arranged formal interviews with each participant to complete the interview schedule face-to-face. Organisation C did not have the required time available to complete to the interview face-to-face therefore the qualitative survey was emailed to the participants with the necessary background information of research endeavour and purpose of the interview.

3.5.2. Construction of the Interview Schedule

The interview schedule construction revolved around the primary and secondary research questions, as stated in Chapter 1. In addition, criteria were applied to the construction of the interview questions as advised by Turner III (2010):

- The data collection instrument should reflect quality in terms of the structure of the questions, relevancy and overall appeal
- The data collection tool should be designed to limit the amount of time it takes for the participants to respond therefore questions should be concise and elicit responses of value
- The researcher should ensure that participants are fully equipped to provide truthful and relevant responses
- The interview questions need to remain within the scope of study but not limit the quality of response
- Double-barrelled questions, where two questions are conveyed at once, should be avoided.

3.5. Application of the Interview Schedule

The application of the interview schedule involved holding a pilot session with the intention of identifying potential gaps in the data collection tool and strengthening the interview questions to elicit the desired outcomes, namely, thick, rich descriptive responses. The pilot study is discussed further below.

3.6.1. Pilot Study

A pilot study may be described as a trial version of the research study where the respondents, environment and interview schedule are as similar to the intended scenario as possible.

The researcher followed the process to conduct the pilot study as advised by Dikko (2016):

1. *Selection of pilot study interview participants* - as initially intended, the researcher approached participants based on the initial criteria to achieve maximum diversity. In this instance, the pilot was conducted on three volunteers to ascertain the efficiency at which the interview could be completed while attaining the richest responses from the participant.

2. *Pilot study interview setting* – the setting needed to be comfortable and safe for the participants to reveal information in case it was privileged to some extent. Therefore, the researcher opted to grant the participant freedom of choice regarding the venue. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) reiterate the importance of participant comfort by maintaining that the participant needs to feel at ease during the interview although minimum criteria must be met (quiet surrounding with minimal distractions).
3. *The pilot interview* – as with the actual interviews, the researcher rehearsed building rapport with the participants, creating a safe space to discuss the relevant topics. This was supposed to assist with facilitating rich, descriptive responses (Berg, 2001; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). Additionally, the interview questions were followed sequentially as these were prepared and shared with the participants beforehand. The researcher noted amendments throughout the pilot interviews to improve on for the main study.

Adjustments were then made to the initial version of the interview questions to ensure that the final data collection efforts were fit for the purpose and fulfilled the necessary requirements of the study. In doing so, several discoveries were realised that led to the amendment of the initial interview schedule and the manner in which it needed to be conducted. Such amendments included adding examples of responses for each question to better direct the respondents toward the purpose of each question and the realistic time frame for completing the interview.

Figure 5 summarises the purposes of a pilot study briefly described below:

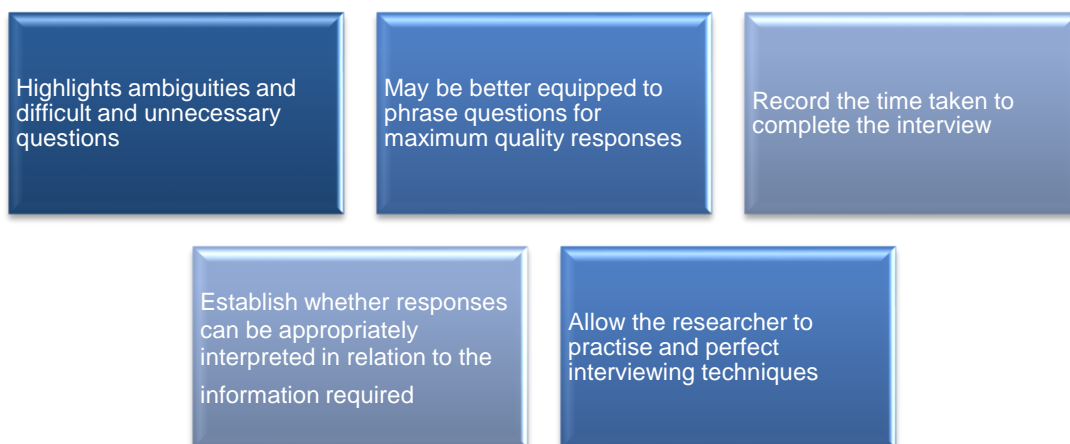


Figure 5: Summary of Pilot Study Purposes (Berg, 2001)

3.7. Data Analysis

The data was organised and analysed by way of thematic analysis. This involved a systematic approach to coding the data and thereafter recognising and noting the appearing themes. The proceeding section discusses the process followed in greater detail.

3.7.1. Thematic Analysis

The data captured from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis which is subjected to identification, analysis and reporting of patterns (themes) within data. Themes are meant to capture important aspects about the data in relation to the research question and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was beneficial to the study as it is known to be flexible in the way it can be applied to data. More so, it allowed the researcher to identify patterns in themes at a quicker rate in comparison to other data analysis techniques. Additionally, thematic analysis ensured that any unwanted data was easily identified and disregarded. This was especially useful when compiling Chapter 5.

Thematic analysis employs an interpretive, systematic process to search and identify trends in the data set with the intention of shedding light on the phenomenon (Smith & Firth, 2011). Data analysed using thematic analysis is subjected to identification, analysis and reporting of patterns (themes) within data. Braun and Clarke (2006) further note that themes are aimed at capturing key aspects from the data in relation to the research questions and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

In layman's terms, thematic analysis involves systematically grouping data items into sets to group them according to designated themes. The themes for the current research endeavour were initially based on the secondary research and interview questions. There was therefore a vast range of themes that needed to be narrowed

down and prioritised to ensure the data would be maximally used and accurately represented.

Further, thematic analysis allows novice qualitative researchers the opportunity to make sense of vast pieces of information that may be intimidating at first. This is possible through the coding that necessitates the methodical analysis of information, which allows the researcher to then link the data to concepts and theories available in literature.

Themes emerge based on the coding done on the data. The coding process according to Braun, Clarke, Hayfield and Terry (2018) involves recognising pieces of data that best describe components of the phenomenon that will later add credibility to the inferences made. A code that is well thought through should at least capture basic descriptions and organise perceptions as its maximum value lies in interpreting aspects linked to the inquiry. Following the collection of data from 18 individuals situated in three organisations, a systematic process was undertaken to transcribe, code and theme the data to create case studies for each organisation. The data collection and analysis occurred concurrently to allow for maximum efficiency and to meet deadlines.

Braun, Clarke, Hayfield and Terry (2018) summarise the process of thematic analysis in six phases as in Figure 6 below.

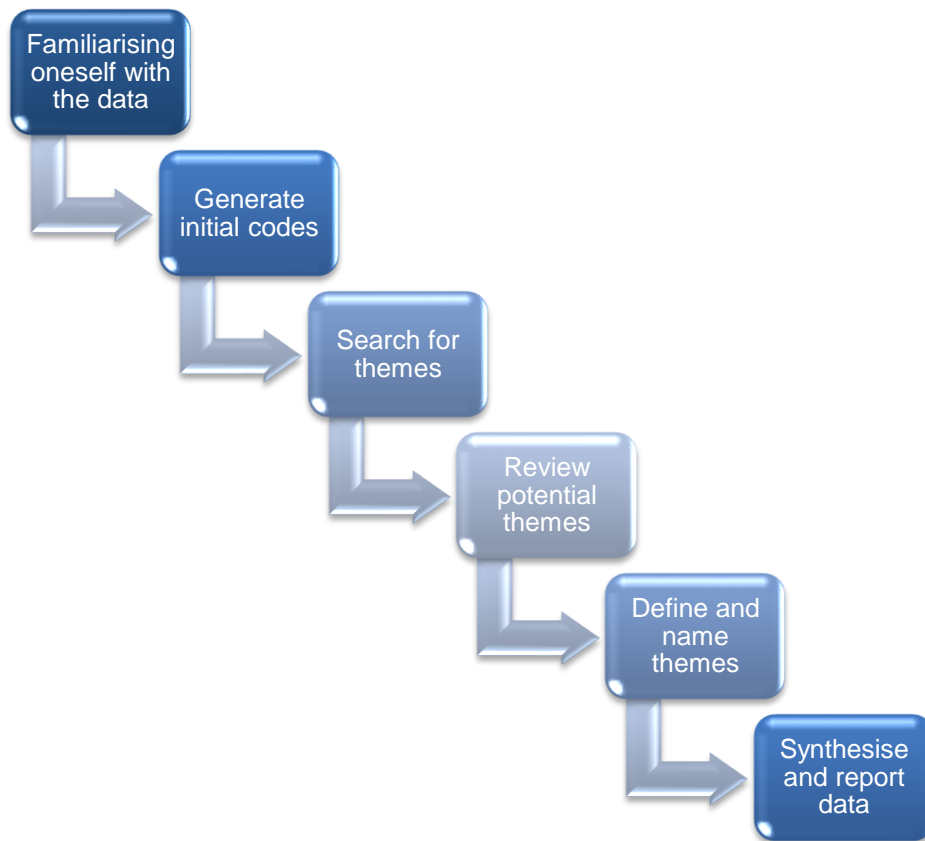


Figure 6: Summarised Process of Thematic Analysis (Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2018)

The participants are quoted in the case studies to enhance the quality and credibility of the information. In doing so, the following apply:

The case study on Organisation A includes quotes as referenced:

Participant 1.1.: “Quote”

Participant 1.2.: “Quote”

Participant 1.3.: “Quote”

The same referencing technique will apply to the case on Organisation B (Participant 2.1; Participant 2.2, et cetera) and Organisation C (Participant 3.1; Participant 3.2, et cetera).

The above-mentioned beneficial features of thematic analysis proved that it was the ideal form of analysis to obtain suitable and relevant information from the data set. In addition, the step-by-step approach encouraged by thematic analysis ensured the collected data from the sample group was optimally used.

3.8. Quality Assessment

The information and data included in Table 1 were evaluated by making use of a quality criterion to further ensure that it was viable and credible:

Table 1: Data Quality Assessment

Criteria	Description
Credibility	<p>Significance of results of the study for participants and readers of the study (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012):</p> <p>All the participants were keen to review the final report and requested copies of the case studies as soon as completed</p>
Transferability	<p>Generalisation of research findings to enable comparisons of the research findings to similar situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):</p> <p>All three cases are based in the same industry, namely insurance, therefore the findings are widely applicable to organisations functioning in this specific environment</p>
Dependability	<p>Dependability and stability of research methods over time (Di Fabio & Maree, 2012):</p> <p>Interviews were conducted, as they are a reliable and valid data collection tool. The data gathered from the interviews were then synthesised and used to build multiple case studies to display the data and answer the research query</p>
Confirmability	<p>Research results are based on the data collected from participants and research methods as opposed to the subjective opinion of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)</p> <p>Queries that may be asked regarding the confirmability of a study include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Are the general methods and procedures of the research described thoroughly?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Can the data collection and processing sequences be sensibly replicated? – Are the study data retained and available for reanalysis by others?
Authenticity	<p>Representation of a wide range of viewpoints inclusive of direct quotes from respondents (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002)</p> <p>Operational management as well as HRM personnel formed the sample group for each case, providing varying perspectives on the topic</p>

3.9. Research Ethics

Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001) state that ethics refers to actions that aim to accomplish good and prevent harm. Scientific research has the tendency to create strain between the researcher's intentions to generalise findings and improve the community and maintain the participants' basic rights, especially those pertaining to privacy.

In addition to the efforts made here to ensure ethical standards were upheld to the highest degree during the entire data collection and analysis process, three basic ethical principles that may assist in alleviating qualitative researchers' ethical dilemmas, are listed below.

Firstly, autonomy refers to educating the participants about their right to be fully informed about the research purposes, to have the freedom to decide whether they prefer to share information requested, and the right to withdraw from the process without penalty (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). Participants are embraced as autonomous individuals with the right to choose their actions as they see fit. Autonomy in qualitative research is often shown by providing participants with an informed consent form, which exchanges and guarantees trust and honesty between the researcher and the participants.

Secondly, beneficence is referred to as doing good for others and preventing harm to those participating. Applying the principle of beneficence during data gathering for qualitative research, the researcher is tasked with protecting the possible vulnerability of the participants and avoiding causing any harm to the individuals who choose to participate (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). The researcher therefore collects data without causing disruption and adds ethical value to the findings, improving their worth.

Lastly, justice is the ethical principle that regards equal share and fairness. Justice is known as the avoidance of participant exploitation and abuse. This may be displayed by the researcher by showing recognition of participant vulnerability and their contributions to the research (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

The observations, documentation and interviews conducted will be safely stored and remain confidential as this will be the researcher's responsibility. Each participant was required to sign a descriptive consent agreement stating the nature of the research with assurance that there will be no disclosure of the participants' personal details or the organisation. Also, it was specified that the research is solely for academic purposes, therefore they will have full access to the final report should they wish. Participants were informed that all information obtained would be represented with the utmost accuracy and sensitivity.

Further, seeing as the participating organisations function within the same industry, it was imperative to maintain the nature of the preliminary results as disclosure to fellow competitors may compromise the integrity of the research or breach the consent form agreement.

Furthermore, the data collected was based on the perceptions of each participant and therefore it was ethically correct to state the findings as accurately as possible while making reasonable deductions and evaluations of the data.

This research study is one that forms part of the Master's Degree in partial completion of the Industrial and Organisational Psychology degree. The observations,

documentation and interviews conducted were safely stored and remain confidential as this was an imperative duty of the researcher.

In addition, data from the interviews were used, only once informed consent from the participants had been obtained. Further, ethical clearance was granted by the University of Pretoria after the study was approved. All information obtained from the interviews was used with the utmost accuracy and confidentiality, according to the agreement with participant.

3.10. Conclusion

The overall design of the research allows the researcher to collect and analyse field research in a reliable and credible manner. The result of the research methodology is a collection of data which can be analysed in a meaningful way to allow for deductions to be made and future research to be based on the findings. Although the analysis is done by making use of emergent themes from the data, it is the researcher's prerogative to interpret the results based on the first-hand experience from the qualitative interviews. Finally, the intention of the chosen methodology is to obtain, organise and analyse the empirical data to produce the content for Chapter 4, conveying the reality of talent acquisition tools and techniques currently trending in the South African context.

Seeing as Chapter 3 provided a detailed methodology on how the empirical data was collected and analysed, Chapter 4 seeks to present the empirical data in the form of three case studies.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 has been organised to present the findings from the three participating organisations regarding the talent acquisition tools and techniques used. The results have been structured based on the thematic analyses applied to the raw data collected. In an effort to improve credibility, the researcher has included quotes from the participants to substantiate the inferences. The introductory information for the participating organisations was adopted from the company websites. To respect the anonymity of the participants, the websites cannot be disclosed or referenced.

4.2. Results from Organisation A

The empirical findings from Organisation A have been discussed below.

4.2.1. Company Orientation

As a massive competitor in the insurance industry, Organisation A is a long-standing financial services firm founded by an ambitious entrepreneur, the current CEO in 1992. With the aid of a capital injection of approximately R10 million from one of South Africa's most prominent commercial banks, the organisation was afforded the opportunity to continue operations and flourish in the industry. Nearly two decades later the company has grown tremendously with rapidly growing operations on four continents, namely, Africa, North America, Europe and Asia. It provides an array of services such as various types of insurance and financial services. It is a shared value insurance company whose purpose and ambition are achieved through a pioneering business model that incentivises employees, individual and corporate clients to live a healthier lifestyle while enhancing and protecting their lives. The organisation's success may be recognised in the fact that it currently covers more than 5.1 million clients.

Their values allude to liberating their talent to encourage maximum performance and work-life balance. They further motivate intellectual leadership, the need for each individual to display drive, urgency and tenacity in their lives while remaining innovative and optimistic. Lastly, Organisation A's values stipulate the importance of maintaining integrity, honesty, fairness and world-class client service.

Organisation A can attribute its large success to its key motivation being the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices. During its initial years of business, the CEO and top management of Organisation A conceptualised the strategy that has led the company to be a leading benchmark in the insurance industry. The organisation has earned 40% market share over the last 17 years, earning the title of the largest open medical scheme in South Africa.

According to the organisation's website, the talent acquisition strategy emphasises the organisation's hunger to chase brilliance, raise the bar and change the world through an effective strategy that will communicate their core goals and culture to potential employees. The company employs more than 5 000 employees who report into the respective divisions, namely, medical aid, gap cover, life insurance, investments, short-term insurance, rewards and credit.

Organisation A's recruitment mission states: "At Organisation A, there are no boundaries. We are not constrained by conventional thinking or held back by industry norms. We don't listen to the sceptics, the naysayers and the defeatists. We are here to change the world. Because we see the world not as it is, but as it can be".

The context within which this specific case study is based is IT driven and considers the participants' views on their talent acquisition practices and processes in the health and investment segments. Organisation A has structured its talent advisory component so that each business unit consists of its own dedicated talent advisory team along with a central talent advisory team that assists the larger units with their recruitment and selection efforts given the enormity and demand thereof.

“The more exceptional our people are, the greater impact we will have”

- CEO of Organisation A

4.2.2. The Concept of Talent Acquisition

Seeing as the organisation is highly technology-driven, the environment in question revolves predominantly around software and systems which provide competitive capabilities to the business and ensure that it functions cost effectively and timeously. It is therefore imperative that the organisation finds talent which focuses on various technologies and capabilities which need to be built up within the IT space and enhances current functioning. Participant 1.5 maintains: “It [Talent Acquisition] would be obtaining the best possible candidate that’s most suitable for the role without causing massive disruption but would be able to deliver highest value for the company and for the individuals within the team. Talent Acquisition encompasses how people grow other people around here. So that is my understanding of it”.

Acquiring talent has been seen simply as finding the best person for every job in terms of skillset and attitude. Based on the observations of the business’s requirements, the talent pool needs to include individuals with high energy and deep specialisation. This proves challenging as it is becoming more popular to find oneself as a generalist. Participants who function in the core business areas see this as a hindrance because technology and business functioning are rapidly gaining sophistication and the search is longing for individuals who have a deep understanding for areas of expertise. Talent Acquisition is all about having the ability and capability to identify such specialists and their potential.

Talent acquisition has been understood and perceived as a science, one which involves identifying roles and from there on finding candidates of a certain calibre based on the outcomes needed to be achieved. More so, TA has been defined as finding the right level of skills for specific functionality in order to meet the goals set out by the business strategy.

Participant 1.1 states: “It has become quite a science, so identifying roles or positions to encourage talent and the right quality or type of persons into your space that will obviously offer the outcomes that you desire to achieve the business strategy.”

Simply stated – Talent Acquisition is about actively searching and acquiring specialised, scarce skilled talent before competitors do and providing them with the tools to support the business’s operating environment and allow for optimum personnel functioning.

Participant 1.3 substantiates the inferences made by mentioning: “.... to find the best person for every job. In terms of skillset, attitude and energy levels and by what we are seeing today, there is a much bigger reliance on very deep specialisation. That’s the new challenge. Talent Acquisition is all about being able to identify them [talent], identify potential, because by the time you have identified them, everybody has identified them. It’s about providing the tools to support the environment”.

4.2.3. Importance of the Talent Acquisition Team

The TA team conducts role clarification for each vacancy with the hiring managers, which is based on the job specification on the recruitment management system which could be systems such as Oracle. The recruitment management system has been updated with prepopulated job specifications to create consistency. The hiring managers’ specifications in terms of the technical needs of the business are compared to the role specification on the system at that given moment. Specifically, applicable to the IT environment, hiring managers provide a detailed template with the technologies and technical capabilities required of potential employee.

The TA team applies the criteria to the sourcing of applicants and filters applications accordingly. Some participants have reported that due to the specificity and technical requirements of a given area, the TA team is seldom able to source the ideal candidate.

In such instances, conducive and trusting relationships with recruitment agencies are of vital importance given that their talent pools are likely to have a greater degree of

variance. Additionally, recruitment agents are able to contact and potentially secure candidates at a faster rate, giving the business the advantage of first-pick.

Participant 1.4 maintains: “We try to provide filters [to better narrow down the required talent], but I don’t know if it’s hyper effective. However, I feel the HR person is not directly in the field and does not understand well enough. Those are keywords and candidates out there know which keywords to use, so I find that it is quite a failure”. Nevertheless, the talent advisors who are responsible for various areas of the business arrange sessions with managers on a regular basis to ensure that the gaps are filled in between management’s requirements and applicant search criteria to achieve an overall understanding and consensus.

More so, management is making a greater effort to meet the talent advisors halfway by providing constructive criticism such as advising on ideal experience, length of previous employment as well as references.

Once both parties are familiar with the agreed upon sourcing criteria, the hope lies in availability of top talent. Seeing as management in the IT space is less involved in the finer details of acquiring initial candidates for vacancies, they agree that evolution is on the horizon and they would like to move towards a Talent Acquisition process whereby they can provide detailed feedback and grow from there. Participant 1.1 says with reference to the above: “...sometimes it does feel like it takes away your competitive advantage, but the Talent Acquisition Team does put together a very good marketing and understanding of what the roles entail.”

In terms of employer branding, there is always more that management can do to attract talent at a national and at an international level. Contract houses and consultancies are perceived as proactive in their strategies to head-hunt and attract talent, which is admired by a larger organisation such as Organisation A.

At an executive level, discussions surround branding and displaying certain units as software dominant areas to attract younger candidates and graduates alike given that the units function predominantly as technology powerhouses. The technology being used and being built is of world-class quality and innovative at a global standard.

Management in the IT space have agreed that it is time to sell their business units for what it is – a technology driven area which requires innovative and entrepreneurial minds which can add the greatest value to their strategy and goals. Participant 1.5 mentions: “Nine times out of ten, people want to come to Organisation A based on the brand”.

Challenge arises as actual marketing elements lie with another team, meaning that managers seldom have direct involvement in what is being broadcasted about the business units and how they are positioned to reel in the cream of the crop. The importance and enormity of the impact of branding specific business units accurately is visible to relevant management but creates frustration because of their lack of control over branding their units as technology-dominant areas.

In order to gain momentum in the branding strategy and promoting the units’ unique identities, the business units have been making attempts to improve their acquisition and branding strategy efforts by hosting the Hack-a-thon which appeals to various novice technologists; project presentations at universities which encourage soon-to-be graduates to join the organisation at an early stage and offering bursaries for university students specialising in various technical degrees, ensuring that they fulfil at least a 3-year learnership at the company. These strategies have been increasing the business units’ affiliation and network of “scarce skills suppliers”, infiltrating the scarce skills market at an earlier stage to gain competitive advantage.

Additionally, Participant 1.4 says: “A lot of candidates know the company brand. It’s a brand that’s out there and a lot of candidates feel that they want to work for and it’s because of the direction we are moving to”.

The idea of using management’s personal LinkedIn profiles for branding and ambassadorship for the company is not a popular one amongst the majority of participants. Although, some consider the idea possible but not recommendable as there is great fear of tarnishing the brand or causing miscommunication. More so, they have recognised the importance of creating a greater presence on social media platforms such as LinkedIn.

Further, LinkedIn is favoured primarily as a branding tool by the organisation to advertise their culture, goals and initiatives as well as an internationally applicable recruitment platform for all those seeking talent whether it is direct management or the TA team. Participant 1.1: “Without a doubt it does assist in having a big brand name. We often see candidates that just want to see the organisation’s brand on their CVs. We must screen for that to ensure that the candidate wants to setup his career at Organisation A and not to use it as a platform to hop to other jobs”.

Furthermore, some participants see social media platforms as advantageous to gain knowledge of what competitors are looking for in their recruits or the possible head-hunting ventures they carry out. By doing so, operational management and HR personnel are better able to track their efforts to keep employees engaged and satisfied at the company.

According to Participant 1.5 it can be argued that: “Given the fact that you are already aligned with a powerful brand within a brand that is internationally recognised and is socially responsible. The company is doing a lot on social media and is engaged with our customer base and so forth”.

4.2.4. Talent Acquisition Tools and Techniques

In the IT space, management agrees that several critical roles require skills which are scarce in South Africa. Although the term “scarce skills” is often overused, it is a growing obstacle for many business units functioning in similar environments as Organisation A. Talent with the desired skill set are either satisfied in their current position or choose to immigrate creating a shortage of scarce skilled talent in South Africa.

Many managers have therefore found it necessary to opt for consultants or source talent on an international basis. Participants agree that even the use of contracting houses is beginning to scale down because they have reached their peak and consultancies have minimal scarce skilled resources left to deploy. Participant 1.1 further states: “It’s the wrong liquid for the cup and that’s why we have to find ways to

maximise functioning with our current resources or strategize more optimally to source the necessary candidates”.

In terms of exact strategies used, the various participants had mentioned the following:

1. *Up-skilling of junior employees* - junior team members are skilled up to the level that they are needed to be at and that is the best approach that can be taken in the current climate
2. *Contract houses* – Contractors are increasingly being brought in to fill roles which are critical and urgent where permanent staff is unavailable and graduate employees are still being skilled up. This saves on cost majority of the time as contractors are only employed for the duration of a specific project.

Participant 1.2 elaborates: “I am not sure they [talent acquisition techniques] are competitive, a lot of the places we source are either through a lot of very trusted Consultancies like organisations we worked with for a very long time and built relationships with the people and they understand the requirements of our area, the kind of person that generally tends to fit in, because we have had some that have not (contractors). They understand the level of expertise we are looking for”.

Further, Participant 1.3 maintains: “We also ensure that these external Recruiters are correctly vetted and have the correct accreditation to fill that role to ensure that there is a trust that is built up between Organisation A and External Agencies and they do have access to those different talent pools”.

3. *Head-hunting* – Oftentimes graduates are approached fresh out of university before competing organisations reach them. Candidates are approached based on their qualifications, societal contributions, innovations and potential value to the company on a national and international basis.

Participant 1.1: “I think in terms of World Best Practices we have strong candidates. I have people interviewing candidates in Australia. I have

people in other countries who are interviewing people that can help us to try to find us candidates”.

4. *Specialised talent acquisition team* – Although applicants usually must follow the standard process of applying via the organisation’s career site, the TA team is advanced in their structure. There are various functions which operate individually but in sync with one another. For example, there are those who source specifically for the IT units of the business, others who source directly from universities and base applicants off referrals. The TA team builds relationships with recruitment agencies to satisfy the overall business needs in terms of the skills required.
5. *Applicant feedback* – if a candidate is rejected in the acquisition process, they are required to complete a form which includes sections on their candidate experience, observations and perceptions of company along with similar questions to enlighten the Talent Acquisition team on where they can improve the overall experience.
6. *Candidate testing* – candidate testing is role and business unit specific. Majority of the time, candidates are required to complete several psychometric tests under the supervision of a registered Industrial Psychologist. More so, case studies are gaining momentum as managers, together with the TA team are developing case studies for candidates to complete as part of the interview. These are usually highly technical and advanced especially for critical roles. These case studies are given to interviewees with the intention of observing their practical knowledge, ability to cope under pressure and several other attributes to determine whether could potentially fit into the environment.

Participant 1.2 elaborates: “All candidates who are interviewed are tested except the graduates who won’t possess those skills until they grow into those roles. We have psychometric tests that are used on certain level of candidate. We also have our own case studies which are architectural or development assignment that are given to candidates such as Java

Engineers who must complete it in a certain time frame. This gives us an indication of the actual aptitude and skills that the candidate has got.”

Participant 1.3 further reiterates: “We also have certain tests that we provide to our people and they send it to the Agencies that are reviewing the candidates”

Participant 1.4 offers their experience by stating: “Based on our previous experience we have now made our recruitment processes more stringent... have a first interview, a second interview which is a more technical. We also do psychometric testing which is a standard but going forward, we want to do psychometric testing internally whereby the candidate writes the tests in our offices... because we send links to candidates to complete the test, and we don’t know exactly who is completing the psychometric test”

7. *Referrals* – Referrals and boomerang hires are popular as managers often become comfortable with hiring candidates which are referred by a trusted source. Additionally, many a time, applicants who are employed based on a reputable reference tend to have more at stake and therefore show more initiative and greater results. Word of mouth is highly favoured although the business finds it imperative for each applicant to follow the standard process including fingerprint checks and verification of qualifications to ensure fairness and quality. Participant 1.5 reiterates the value leaders have found in regular usage of referrals when acquiring talent based on personal experience within their team. Participant 1.5 substantiates this inference by mentioning: “Almost half of my team were hired via referrals”.
8. *Sourcing process* – Executive management reports that even though the speed of the acquisition process may be slowed down, they ensure the process is rigorous and thorough to employ only the best candidates of which meet the exact criteria set out on a technical and soft-skill level.

Participant 1.1 substantiates the accuracy of the sourcing process by stating: “We already have certain strong skills in our team such as Architects, Senior

Managers, Business Analysts who are the right level of people that can come up with the correct checks and balances to make sure that we employ the right type of persons or skills in our teams”

Further, Participant 1.2 mentions: “...request individualised feedback and request that they [panel members] not talk to each other because there is this groupthink and bias that happens. I also have my own decision which I do not share it with anyone so that I do not influence anything”

Participant 1.3 provides another example of how the sourcing process could be influenced: “For example, my PC broke; this guy walks into my office. I thought to myself that my PA is very efficient and that she got IT to sort out my PC so quickly. So, I told him to get online and fix it. That’s exactly what he did, in record time. Unbeknown to me – this guy was the candidate. Need not say – was hired on the spot.”

4.2.5. Conclusion

The participants from Organisation A were able to adequately define talent acquisition demonstrating that management has a fair idea of what talent management is composed of at its core. More so, the participants were mainly from the management team who work in the core operating functions of the business. They were able to describe their perceptions of their interactions with the talent acquisition team, talent outsourcing consultancies and recruitment agencies leading to the conclusion that they value the deliverables of teams more than the choice of employment channel.

The participants’ primary concern regarding talent acquisition was finding and securing scarce skilled talent to ensure that the business retains its competitive advantage and reputation by achieving the end goals. The essence of the newest strategy which Organisation A has relayed reiterates the importance of adding greater effort into branding themselves as individual business units and the specific capabilities which they seek instead of generalising the company’s brand and creating assumptions – potentially misleading possible candidates.

4.3. Results from Organisation B

The empirical findings from Organisation B have been discussed below.

4.3.1. Company Orientation

The primary intention of Organisation B is to help clients grow their savings, protect their valued items and invest for the future. More so, Organisation B prides itself on assisting companies and organisations care for and reward their employees and members. Through its own network of advisers or through the efforts of independent brokers and utilising new platforms, Organisation B provides practical financial solutions for people, communities and businesses.

The organisation houses approximately 15000 employees dispersed across the various brands namely life insurance, rewards, investments and savings, healthcare along with car and home insurance.

The organisation's vision is to satisfy the wealth creation and preservation, insurance and income needs of clients through its deep understanding of the upper retail insurance, savings and investment market in South Africa. This is directly related to the company's mission which states:

We commit to fulfil your lifelong financial needs by:

- Providing value-for-money solutions that are relevant and unique
- Engaging in a transparent, simplified and effective manner
- Building enduring partnerships

Organisation B prides itself on its values and works extremely hard on ensuring that a clear line of sight is created throughout the company, these values further guide all business decisions impacting clients and employees.

According to the company website, the values include:

Accountability – We show accountability in our willingness to take ownership for our roles, responsibility for our actions and outcomes, and by honouring our obligations to all stakeholders.

Diversity – Throughout our organisation we embrace and promote diversity, together with the many talents and skills our employees bring from different backgrounds and perspectives.

Excellence – We strive for excellence in everything we do, by delivering the highest standard of products, service and performance to all stakeholders.

Innovation – We thrive on innovation by challenging ourselves to find better solutions, continuously improving our processes and growing our people.

Integrity – We uphold integrity in living up to what we say, doing the right thing, being honest and treating all people with respect.

Teamwork – Through teamwork, we support each other by listening, collaborating, encouraging and respecting each other in our quest to achieve mutually beneficial results.

Organisation B has structured its talent advisory component so that each business unit consists of its own dedicated talent advisory team along with a central talent advisory team which assists the larger units with their recruitment and selection efforts given the enormity and demand thereof.

4.3.2. Importance of Talent Acquisition

Participants agree that there has been a big shift from the traditional recruiter to the newly tagged Talent Advisor or talent acquisition specialist. The key quality is around sales capability that the TA really becomes a sales person whereas in the past, it was more admin and managed a process. Nowadays, it's more and the TA manages the admin process but also must sell the company, sell the manager and sell the opportunity.

The Talent Advisor and the advisory capability needs to be great at closing deals - when it comes to extending an employment offer, it is about more than simply sending the employment offer to close the deal. Rather, the TA capability extends its service offering by providing in-depth analysis and explanation of how the offer works and was calculated. Extended services such as this ensures that the candidate is placed with minimal or no complications.

More so, talent acquisition is a vital component to the talent management process as it requires the talent advisor to understand work, because work in the traditional sense is a person who has a job title or role title, but work is not cast in stone. This contributes greatly to the employees' experience and their loyalty to the company along with their job satisfaction. One needs to also look for and identify the potential recruit for the future. For example, to be able to see that the candidate is great for this current job, but in a year or two they would be great in alternative roles, promoting growth and succession within the organisation.

The talent advisory role is almost like being a brand ambassador – one is required to know the business because if the TA needs to sell it, they need to make sure that they know it. The role is about being a scout in general, it's not about only doing the job at a desk looking for talent, and it is about wherever they go and forever scouting for people that could possibly be someone that the business could employ.

4.3.3. Talent Acquisition Tools and Techniques

Organisation B utilises the typical applicant tracking system where adverts are published in various places such as different job boards, external social media such as LinkedIn and PNet. Candidates are then directed to an applicant tracking system which is one of the tools and LinkedIn is used primarily for headhunting especially that of passive candidates.

LinkedIn is certainly one of the primary techniques used by Organisation B to attract and acquire talent. Organisation B recently purchased a Talent Insights Licence of LinkedIn which is a higher-level view. This license allows the TA team to search for scarce and critical skills on a national basis; the Insights Licence further provides a global view of talent. Additionally, it is evident in pockets of the business that the referral program has been implemented where individuals can refer talent that is well suited for certain roles and receive incentives in return, on condition that the individual placed remains in the respective role for a specified amount of time at minimum.

In terms of Boomerang hire, when people resign exit interviews are done to purposefully ask questions like, “if there was an opportunity would you come back?”, “If you were to come back, what would ideally be the opportunity and what would you want to be different?” according to Participant 2.3.

Participant 2.2 offers their experience of social media for recruitment and selection by stating: “I would definitely say social media and referrals for recruitment because it really works and assists.”

Organisation B utilises several strategies to ensure that it attracts and acquires the highest quality talent which will create sustainable growth and ensure innovation resulting in continued competitiveness in the insurance industry.

Several participants reiterate that the world of recruitment has changed a lot where in the past it was easy for a company to advertise a role and wait; they call it “post and pray”. There has been a massive shift in mind set regarding competitive talent acquisition practices in that talent now has options and the organisation’s brand means a lot to them.

Participant 2.1 mentioned that TA teams need to ensure that from a brand perspective, the brand stands out; people want to work for the brand and from an Employer Value Proposition (EVP) perspective that the offering to the potential employee is something that is in line with their expectations and desires. Such expectations may include the culture that they will experience in the company to the team that they will work with, the opportunities to grow, how challenging the work is to how especially within the younger generation, getting them exposed to many aspects of the business’s functioning and not keeping them too long in a specific role. In conjunction, Participant 2.3 offers: “ideally you want to be at the forefront in terms of creating that culture that would retain them”.

More so, Organisation B intends on creating an attitude of proactivity by emphasising the importance of the business growing data bases of talent or pipelines of talent. Collectively this can be achieved if each individual takes it upon themselves to be brand ambassadors and talent scouts – Participant 2.1: “...that’s ideally where we

want to go and that where we kind of hoping to go. Also, part of the strategies is around people.”

Another strategy which Organisation B has been working on perfecting is creating a sense of personalisation in its attempt to attract and acquire talent. It is really about knowing the individual and personalising interactions for instance, finding commonalities and starting the conversation based on that – Participant 2.2: “It’s not just someone who sits behind a PC and sends out job adverts and hope that people are going to apply. That way we never going to get the talent we are looking for”. Participant 2.4 is passionate about bringing back under-utilised strategies such as open days at universities and offering bursaries and scholarships: “Scholarships or bursaries that are really attracting the right type of talent.”

In terms of other strategies, TA teams have been hosting on-going recruitment days, where they search for candidates for entry level positions, in the effort to attract the right calibre of candidates so those that have the qualification but may not have the experience. The business wants to bring such potential into the company and allow them the opportunity of exposure in the business and help them to understand what goes on in the working world.

Participants revealed planned strategies such attending open days at the universities to assist with attracting students to apply for internships and learner ships which are excellent for the organisation because it will help attract a larger number of candidates, for example Participant 2.1 stated that they hold several events at universities to build stronger relationships between various business units and certain faculties based on their need for talent: “We do a lot of campus recruiting, campus drives we do activations, we host certain events...”

Participants agree that LinkedIn as a strategy is interesting because the business uses it not solely for advertising vacancies but showcasing the EVP offered through on-going advertisements as well. More so, the online platform is utilised as a vehicle to inform potential candidates what the business does, why it is an absolute opportunity to work for Organisation B, whilst maintaining a sense of creativity and innovation.

Overall the intention of having a customised LinkedIn page is to reveal aspects of the business which are not routinely revealed to the external environment such as the internal culture and atmosphere as supported by Participant 2.4 who states: “We genuinely work very hard but also play just as hard so we use it to attract people to show them it’s a great environment to work for. It [LinkedIn page] must represent our culture”.

Participants agree that insourcing and outsourcing have their respective benefits and are both useful methods of attracting and acquiring talent, given the circumstances as reiterated by Participant 2.1: “It all depends on the role and what the company needs at that moment”.

The participants from Organisation B use the term insourcing to describe a method of talent acquisition which makes use of internal talent. For example, should there be a vacancy in the IT department, only internal staff has knowledge and access thereto. Insourcing talent can be beneficial as the applicants are generally equipped with institutional knowledge, understand the environment in depth allowing them to contribute and leverage off their current relationships with potential stakeholders.

The insourcing of talent involves many internal referrals especially for roles which are more difficult than most to fill. Talent advisors who deal with vacancies which prove challenging to fill usually request internal referrals from those who previously stood in those shoes. The participants’ responses led to the conclusion that nobody knows the role requirements better than the previous role owner. They are most likely to know other people in the business who shares the core skills required for the role. Participant 2.2 emphasises the importance of always reviewing referrals: “That’s why it is important for talent advisors to look at those referrals because it cost saving as well.”

Participants from Organisation B understand the term outsourcing as a talent acquisition technique which makes use of acquiring talent from contract houses or temporary placements. They are of the view that outsourcing and bringing in new blood is equally important as internally mobilising current staff, hence the importance of keeping abreast of supply and demand.

Further, if there is a limited supply of external talent and the organisation can grow its own talent then it must make sure that all limited supply is identified before the demand is driven up. Whereas if the business has the demand for certain talent the issue revolves around bringing people in and outsourcing and it does not necessarily have to be on a permanent basis, it can be on a contract basis.

The consensus around insourcing versus outsourcing is that management in the core operating functions of the business see equal value dependent on what the organisation needs to achieve its end goal as stated by Participant 2.1: “There is a place for both [insourcing and outsourcing]; I would not say that one is actually better than the other. You need from a talent strategy point all those options in place. Even things like secondments from within the environment or contracts, borrowing talent, it’s all important”.

The current use of e-recruitment and selection was addressed by Participant 2.1 who stated that whatever applicant tracking system the organisation makes use of the less steps to apply for jobs, the better the experience and system. Concerning the current program Organisation B relies on, the participant believes that works well, but it is not ideal. Participant 2.1 further provides: “There are still a lot of clicks and things you need to submit.” Implying that the organisation’s system could be more efficient.

The overall goal of any recruitment management system for e-recruitment and selection is to make the process as simple, quick and easy as possible to attract the potential employees to apply and set the organisation’s application process apart from competitors. Participant 2.3 mentions: “If you convince them to apply, then they go on and for them it seems like an effort, they won’t do it”.

Also evident in the application process is the organisation’s maturity in terms of technical advancement and the importance of digitalisation to the company. The image created by candidates is based on the ease of application for jobs. If there are several steps for candidates to apply for jobs and masses of information are required, candidates are likely to assume that this is not a company at the forefront of technology

and digitalisation. This perception may impact negatively on the overall brand and value proposition.

Additionally, regarding the applicant sieving process especially for roles which receive large numbers of CVs - there is so much technology out there and so many applicant tracking systems that uses artificial intelligence to rank candidates through machine learning and through that recommendations are delivered to the TA team. In addition, Participant 2.1 says: "There is a lot of work and we need to move towards something like that".

Also, around matches of interests, artificial intelligence can help with that. Headhunting has also become an important strategy, especially for difficult-to-place roles. Participant 2.3 maintains: "What I would love is a platform or a system that is almost able to comb the internet looking for somebody that is head of a specific discipline, let's say head of actuaries".

Participant 2.2 maintains that there are benefits to e-recruitment and selection in the sense that all the applications go to "one bottle". There is continuous control in terms of advertising content, time limits on the advert can be easily reduced or extended in addition to who may view the advert for example, agencies, internal or external candidates.

The benefits of the current recruitment management system revolve around being able to control and utilise the system to its maximum capacity especially when recruiting for roles which usually receive enormous mounds of resumes and CVs such as administrative vacancies. When refining applicants' CVs in such cases, the e-recruitment system allows the acquisition team to set pre-screening questions for all applicants.

The pre-screening questions automatically separate applicants dependent on their responses. Usually, applicants who do not meet the minimum criteria are disregarded by the recruiter whilst those who meet at least 80% of the criteria are moved further in the acquisition process. The recruitment management process allows enough

flexibility for the recruiter to tailor make the advertisement to attract applicants who match the criteria best and minimise the manual sorting of applicants.

In the sense of a more senior role as opposed to an administrative role, it does not necessarily mean that a person on a senior level got to the system and applied. That is the downside of the current recruitment management system used by Organisation B is that the percentage of senior applicants is severely reduced as oftentimes these applicants do not apply on the system but rather apply directly to the talent advisor or recruitment agency rather than the company website. The issue with that method is that CVs and applications have a higher possibility of being lost in the inbox of someone's email.

In terms of employer branding, Participant 2.1 states: "The recruiter's online profile is important. A recruiters profile needs to almost depict what the person would find when they get here."

The statement from Participant 2.1 can be interpreted to say for instance, if the company's environment is about fun, energy and family orientation then that is the culture potential employees can expect to experience. Applicants nowadays want transparency and authenticity from employers implying that the experience which is advertised is exactly what candidates expect to experience if placed in the organisation. Applicants are known for preferring to engage with the recruiter on a personal level and do not take lightly to deception or alternative respondents.

If applicants are unsuccessful, they want to know why they are unsuccessful and what they need to work on. Participant 2.4 placed great emphasis on making personal connections and therefore having a profile that then allows candidates to engage with the hiring manager or recruiter on the desired level.

Competitive techniques currently being used by Organisation B in its talent acquisition efforts include machine learning or artificial intelligence as well as the whole concept around personalising functions and increased usage of LinkedIn.

By virtue of the full LinkedIn licence, TA teams can customise content based on the ideal skills required for a vacancy and view other career sites on LinkedIn. If identified as a company seeking IT technical skills, actuaries, financial sector candidates or graduates the opportunities are endless.

The organisation has the option of adding a significant amount of content on the career page regarding various opportunities in the company. The careers page as a technology platform works to allow the TA team to tailor the content and headhunt potential employees more easily. This functionality creates a personalised feel and contributes to branding the organisation's culture and value proposition. Participant 2.1 further explains the intention of the careers page: "They [applicants] are not going in and seeing the general vision, mission et cetera. This is boring to them. So, the customised and personalised content is really how we are going to attract the talent better".

In terms of headhunting, Participant 2.4 states that the trick is to almost get into the specific vacancy to understand it as a talent advisor. The more the TA understands the vacancy requirements, the better and easier it is to source the best candidates.

Further, the Talent Acquisition teams within the organisation are making great traction in training executive committees on the usage of LinkedIn. The goal is to encourage executives to improve their profiles and create images which are exciting and share all their achievements within their teams because when active talent search for new roles, their first instinct seems to be profiling the relevant manager.

4.3.4. Impacts Experienced by Organisation B

4.3.4.1. Positive Impacts

Positive outcomes realised by the participants from Organisation B include positive candidate experience regarding the service provided by the talent acquisition team. The candidate experience referred to involved candidates being treated as clients by way of professional communication and quick responses albeit post-interview or general inquiries.

Further, Participant 2.1 spoke about the meaningful branding of Organisation B. Talent acquisition specialists play the role of a brand ambassadors as well, which holds great credit because one becomes an ambassador who has fully bought into the brand, the organisation's offerings and its culture. These factors are then transferred to potential employees especially when talent advisors are headhunting.

Participant 2.4 states: "...in your actions and your example it will have a positive spinoff in terms of the applicant, so when they land here, they already are hooked onto the brand and are committed to many different things", the remark made by Participant 2.4 implies that if the TA team serves as a dual by representing the organisation and promoting the brand, applicants who are hired would have already been persuaded by the brand and buy into the company's vision sooner.

Since Organisation B had opted for internal talent acquisition teams as the primary source of recruitment and selection, there have been hugely noticeable income gains as the teams have acquired licenses for various career portals and have raked in several executives through headhunting efforts. By affording the internal TA teams the opportunity of sourcing and headhunting without the interference of external agencies – the business had already started saving costs largely due to the exclusion of agency fees and rather fully utilising its own resources. Participant 2.2 states: "It has been proven because we placed the head of advanced analytics and we saved over three hundred thousand Rands by just placing one person ourselves and not using an agency and we saved in total one point seven million in two months which is brilliant". The statistic provided by Participant 2.2 is representative of the outcomes achieved by minimizing the use of recruitment agencies whereas the company had already employed fully equipped TA teams for each business unit as well as a central TA team.

4.3.4.2. Negative Impacts

Participant 2.3 stated that one of the downfalls of their current talent acquisition process is the excessive steps in the recruitment process. The process is often rushed into without thoroughly planning and identifying the needs of the role in the new way

of work. This has been evident in situations where the hiring manager puts the vacancy on hold or the position becomes obsolete. This result in negative candidate experiences as they have invested time and effort into applying, attending interviews or completing assessments. Participant 2.1 mentions: “I think having too many steps in the process. I found so many times that halfway through, the position is put on hold and the Line Manager decides on not to recruit. That is bad in terms of the experience of candidates.”

Further, the calibre of talent and role specific requirements are not clearly defined and refined. Hiring managers seek individuals who are identical to the previous role owner which stifles the business and its growth. The intention should rather be to identify talent which is fresh, innovative and different to create space for new ideas and variety in perspective. Participant 2.2 maintains: “We look for exactly the same person that we had, and which left the role and it is not always the right person for the role”, this statement reiterates the drawback of employing talent with similar profiles to those who already existed in the business due to the use of standard criteria or criteria which have not been updated.

Additionally, Participant 2.3 maintains: “We also get as many of the same people as before. New blood, new thinking, I believe is an important one”. Moreover, Participant 2.3 maintains that the candidate lands the job but results in leaving the organisation shortly afterwards as the reality of role and environment do not correlate with what was conveyed during the interview. This occurs mainly due to hiring managers attempting to sell the organisation and the team to candidates while creating unrealistic expectations during interviews.

Participant 2.2 supports this by saying: “Rather be honest because then the applicant can assess for themselves if they want to work in the environment”, thus allowing candidates to measure the full scope of the role and the organisation’s environment. Further, Participant 2.3 adds: “A person joins the company, and two months later he has left because this is not what he was interviewed for and he is not happy ... What we say when we advertise the role, what we say in the interview lets stand by it and not change it as we go along because that seems to happen a lot”.

Participant 2.4 adds that: “It is important that what you sell to them and what they find is the same thing”.

Additional downfalls brought up by the participants from Organisation B include convincing leaders to follow the TA process stringently. The TA team had been trying their best to eradicate or at least reduce the use of recruitment agencies although some resistance has been felt as hiring managers have long-standing relationships with recruitment agents which has been difficult to compete with from internal recruiters’ perspectives. There is great cost involved in such scenarios as the internal talent acquisition team could make more placements but due to pre-existing agency relationships and favouritism thereof – the business suffers the consequences of mounting agency fees. To create a solution-driven talent acquisition ethic, participants have been making concerted efforts to address these difficulties and rectify them. In addition, Participant 2.4 states: “That’s the mind-set change we are trying to pull together” implying that it is merely a matter of convincing managers to make greater use of the internal TA team as opposed to using agencies.

Finally, the current recruitment management system requires applicants to type everything in. It is not user friendly for external applicants because most of the applicants are unable to complete the applications due to system errors and a lack of assistance from the help line.

4.3.5. Best Practices and Polices

Organisation B maintains its ethical stance with regards to its best practices for talent acquisition. The participants agree that they strive to remain fair and allow each applicant an equal opportunity in the process given the role requirements. More so, should the requirements state Employment Equity preferred – the talent acquisition practitioners keep true to the requirement and strongly apply the criteria to their search regardless of the level of the role.

Participant 2.2 mentions that it is possible to manipulate the acquisition process in terms of non-negotiable requirements such as race although they work hard to ensure

their processes, practices and policies are held to a high standard - Participant 2.1 further supports the perception: “When it comes to best practices, policies and trends is that we are fair in what we do. We give everybody a fair chance, we look at if we say that we want EE preferred, we stick by it ...”

Additionally, the TA team has been exposed to situations where the final cost to company for a candidate had been influenced unethically. Therefore, best practices applied from a TA perspective include applying fairness to the actual monetary offer for candidates. This is done by requesting the most recent pay slip from potential employee to ensure that the offer is aligned to their skills, competencies, expected value-add and it is competitive. Moreover, the organisation offers each employee a remuneration package reflective of the role’s requirements as opposed to being based on racial grouping, culture, sexual orientation or gender. Participant 2.3 says: “...be fair when it comes to the actual offer, that we offer the same sort of package and not change our minds depending on skin colour et cetera”. The participant’s response implies that there have been instances where the remuneration package had been impacted based on unconscious bias, which is being rectified and advised against.

More so, role requirements form stringent requirements when searching for candidates and this forms boundaries within which the talent acquisition practitioners need to search. In this way – unfairness and bias caused by nepotism may be avoided. It is therefore critical for talent acquirers to obtain and maintain detailed job specifications from hiring managers.

It may be perceived as petty or minor, but many candidates struggle to upload their documents when applying for jobs on the company website. Usually, these CVs are sent directly to the recruiting team and most likely disregarded or misplaced. Participants raised a point which came across as common. Participant 2.4 adds to this inference by stating: “... also we must be fair in the sense that if we saying that we are willing to accept a candidates CV directly from a line manager, we are also willing to do the very same if the candidate cannot for whatever reason upload his CV on the company job portal and they were having problems and now suddenly I am saying sorry I can’t help you”.

From this statement, it can be deduced that oftentimes there is unfairness in the way in which external candidates are treated depending on their method of application submission. The participants are working toward ensuring that no candidate is excluded based on this reasoning and each candidate is granted the opportunity of consideration. Participant 2.1 emphasises this point by saying: “We need to follow the same process and the process needs to be the same for everyone in that sense”.

In terms of transparency in the interview, participants stated topics which should be openly discussed to create a transparent relationship between the candidate and organisation. Such topics include study debt, leave payable or any inhibiting factors; these are questions which should be addressed upfront in the interview to avoid progressing the candidate in the process unknowingly and inevitably wasting time and resources of both parties. Additionally, Participant 2.3 mentions: “That helps us to make a fair decision rather than finding out later and then sorry we don’t have budget and you have wasted that entire time”.

4.3.6. Conclusion

Organisation B has found value in maintaining a strong presence by branding itself strategically on platforms such as universities and LinkedIn. More so, the talent acquisition component of the organisation’s talent management model takes precedence as the respective talent advisors have cascaded the importance of putting the most effort in at the beginning of the talent management process to attract and acquire talent who will be best fitting. Further, participants from Organisation B have emphasised their preference for making use of internal resourcing before considering approaching recruitment agencies.

4.4. Results from Organisation C

The empirical findings from Organisation C have been discussed below.

4.4.1. Company Orientation

Founded in 1998 by three founders, Organisation C is relatively young and is steadily growing. Organisation C began with a product line which included car and household insurance for South Africans. Fast forward to 2003, the institution was registered as a financial service provider and launched a new product to cater for unique business needs for businesses which varied in size and type. By the year 2008, Organisation C had entered the market of life insurance whilst the sister company had launched its first online quoting system in Australia.

The company was conceptualised based on the realisation that insurance benefitted those who claimed and there was minimal differentiation between high and low risk clients regarding their policy pricing ranges. Thus, the founders of Organisation C decided to base their business on the notion that every client will always get something back. The company developed the concept of rewarding their clients by rebating them should they not claim for a specified period. Ever since, Organisation C has paid out more than R3 million in cash as bonuses to claim-free clients and saved their clients hundreds of millions of Rands in premiums. The organisation is presently most well-known for its application of innovation to its product line whilst ensuring value for clients' money.

The business has several segments namely, car insurance, home and contents, life insurance, business and several more cutting-edge products which are offered to their clients at reasonable premiums with subsidiaries in Australia and New Zealand.

Together with the call centre and corporate staff, Organisation C is currently powered by approximately 13000 employees. Regarding the organisation's talent acquisition policies, the company has branded itself as an employer of choice for the following reasons according to the company website:

- **We're a great company to work for:** Organisation C is known for its vibrancy, success and values orientated atmosphere along with its awesome culture. The organisation is growing rapidly not only in size but in the market as well. This implies on-going career and growth opportunities for its people who are exposed to a great South African leadership team. Our success can also be attributed to the outstanding people who work for us.

- **We will help you get to the top:** We invest a lot in our people by offering accredited training and on-going support for personal development. Whether through e-learning, classroom training or through our formal mentorship and leadership training programmes, we will hold your hand throughout.
- **We will reward you:** The organisation lives its value of 'Recognition' which means a strong drive to reward our people who excel. We offer competitive salary packages as well as great monetary and non-monetary incentives to those who perform better than the rest.
- **We offer great benefits:** Our staff have access to great employee benefits, including retirement, medical and risk benefits together with a Wellness Centre for them and their families.
- **We work hard and play hard:** Organisation C has an informal culture and our dress code is casual. We also have sports facilities (soccer, cricket, basketball, netball and volleyball), a games room, pool tables and table tennis facilities on our campus. We have an awesome vibe because of regular 'dress-up days' and fun 'gees' events to celebrate our diversity and company culture.
- **We care about the communities around us:** The community initiative team is a dynamic Corporate Social Responsibility initiative through which we support our staff to give back. Aside from our staff getting hands on involved in various charitable projects the company also matches funds every Rand raised by staff for charity.

Organisation C has structured its talent advisory component so that the entire business's talent acquisition efforts lie with a central talent advisory team which assists with the recruitment and selection of employees given the enormity and demand thereof.

4.4.2. Importance of Talent Acquisition

The participants from Organisation C were asked to provide their experience of the importance of Talent Acquisition, of which the responses provided consensus.

Participant 3.1 indicates that in a world of skills shortages and a competition for skills, TA is a critical aspect of the business strategy. It drives business success by ensuring it attracts culturally aligned talent that are high performing. The talent strategy is a critical part of the business strategy and vice versa. Participant 3.4 has been adamant that Talent Acquisition and the efforts required are a crucial component, without this the company will not be able to compete within the industry accordingly and people is what gives business competitive advantage, more specifically, as Participant 3.3 mentions, TA contributes to factors such as sourcing top talent, attracting even passive talent, building talent pipelines, being brand ambassadors and managing stakeholders.

Participant 3.2 alludes that a crucial part of the business as they investigate different markets and industries that they aspire the business to tackle, is getting the right people on board. In the professional scarce skill labour market there is a war for talent and with IT skills in the country especially in the development space a challenge has been presented as many businesses rely on IT skills as they enter the fourth industrial revolution.

4.4.3. Talent Acquisition Tools and Techniques

The participants from Organisation C has several recruitment and selection tools and techniques of which they have been using and some of which they have recently started to put more emphasis on. Sourcing strategies vary depending on the nature of the roles, Organisation C is competitive and strategic in that they make use of hybrid strategies which utilise a variety of techniques, tailored to the role requirements.

The organisation's brand attracts the high-quality talent in industry and they have had tremendous success with staff referrals which are perceived as sustainable techniques. More so, there is a strategic objective to increase the opportunities for disabled applicants in the business and partner with Non-Governmental Organisations to achieve this. There is increased attention in the HR and Talent spaces about AI, Machine Learning and other futuristic trends, but according to Participant 3.4, the

traditional recruitment environment will still have another 5 years in South Africa before it starts taking off.

These involve a blended approach including:

- Social Media platforms such as LinkedIn, Giraffe, Facebook and Twitter - Participant 3.4.: “Leveraging of Social Media platforms with executive accounts that enables zoned-in searches for talent”
- A staff referrals program which encourages staff members to take on the role of brand ambassadors by promoting the organisation, its culture and various EVP offerings - Participant 3.4.: “Incentive system linked to referrals from internal staff”
- Strategic partnerships with institutions such as Harambee and QASA
- Company website (e-Recruitment)
- Recruitment Agents and recruiting websites such as Career Junction, PNet, Careers24 and several other leading recruitment portals
- Voice and behavioural assessments include candidates’ submissions of video CVs to save time and effort on both ends as mentioned by Participant 3.4.: “Various ability/personality and EQ assessments are used as part of initial screening process pre-employment and used further in terms of on-going professional development”
- Headhunting typically is only an option for senior level and critical skill roles as mentioned by Participant 3.4: “Various job-boards used for sourcing and attracting talent that is streamed through online career portal supported by PNet”
- Staff referrals specifically for Call Centre, Sales and Service and IT roles
- Strategic partnerships with places like “WeThinkCode” for software developers
- Sponsorship programmes such as “we code” (attract IT students) which target Actuarial Career fairs and sponsorships to attract Actuarial graduate and SABC Disability Expo and SAQA affiliation to attract candidates living with disabilities
- Visible brand (above-line advertising) feeding into the brand of the company to inspire employer of choice with potential future employees;

- The recent “It’s a calling” campaign where staff of the company was used to give impact as to why they chose the insurance industry, relayed a powerful message that will also generate traffic on the careers page

Furthermore, the hiring model is divided into 3 spheres each catering to certain specialisations in the business:

- *Sphere 1: Call Centre (Sales, Claims Process and International Markets)*

The hiring model from the Call Centre perspective depends heavily on branding and company image. This is then communicated via internal talent to external talent. More so, this sphere makes use of career website platforms which alleviate the administrative efforts from the recruitment coordinators. More so, the organisation uses a combination of strategies to acquire talent depending on the role.

Participant 3.3 substantiates this by saying: “With a strong brand we get a lot people wanting to join. So, referrals from Staff are very important source, Careers page on website, advertising on branded Taxis in Centurion (transporting staff), Careers 24 and making use of Giraffe recruitment platform (has voice recording technology)”.

- *Sphere 2: Face-to-Face Sales*

Seeing as the business is fairly established but still growing, it pushes the recruitment team to use the latest tools and work harder than ever to maintain and develop networks. Participant 3.3 maintains: “Strong use of LinkedIn, great tool for connecting with industry professionals. Word-of-mouth referrals from ex-colleagues in the same industry. Headhunting people from competitors”.

- *Sphere 3: Back office staff and Support staff (HR, Marketing, Actuarial)*

The efforts made to recruit the top talent for this sphere include career days, agencies and social media platforms. These techniques have proven successful thus far and will continue to be used and developed. Participant 3.3 goes on to say: “Career fairs at Universities in Gauteng. Recruitment Agencies for highly specialised roles. LinkedIn for professional roles”.

Insourcing and Outsourcing

The view around insourcing and outsourcing of talent is stratified as some participants believed outsourcing talent will cause misfit between on-boarded new employees and the organisational and HR strategy. Others view insourcing and outsourcing from the perspectives of the individual units and their needs.

Participant 3.1 states that all key roles must buy in to the company's service and performance culture which is compromised with outsourcing talent and those who deal with client engagements are exclusively insourced. The participant goes on to say that considering the recent change in approach from a legislative approach, the treatment of outsourced staff and a general growing unhappiness with such arrangements in terms of vulnerable workers is an important additional consideration. Outsourcing specifically for roles where financial advice is given pose additional risks to a business in terms of legal compliance with legislation. Wider risk management from a data protection and protection of personal information is also another potential risk of outsourcing. Currently Organisation C does not outsource any of its core business and client interaction processes.

Participant 3.1 further substantiates: "It is difficult to replicate culture through third parties... Anyone who has any direct interactions with our clients must have bought into our culture and service ethos. It is much easier to do that when the individual concerned is on your payroll". Moreover, Participant 3.3 mentions: "... outsourcing consultants will never have true meaning of your business culture, strategy, sense of urgency et cetera".

Participant 3.2 reiterates the point made by Participant 3.1 by explaining it from the pro-insourcing angle. In the opinion of Participant 3.2, insourcing would be preferable for recruiting and selecting talent as the business has skilled people who understand the company systems and the business. Therefore, outsourcing may be risky as it would most likely compromise the organisation's intellectual property by bringing in outsiders.

Participant 3.3 manages the recruitment function for Organisation C and this has provided perspective in terms of costs and benefits of insourcing. The business has an extremely efficient TA team according to the participant, which delivers on limited deadlines and maintains lower costs as opposed to the cost of outsourcing which can be exorbitant. Participant 3.3: “I have always worked in an environment where TA was insourced, so I am very biased”.

Lastly, Participant 3.4 mentioned an alternative view where they mentioned that as the company and product line diversified the need to look at external resourcing became more evident and needed. In their opinion the business units should dictate whether insourcing or outsourcing is needed within that specific unit and must be clearly linked to the main strategy and objective of the organisation accordingly. Both insourcing and outsourcing has got equal value if this meets the business prerogative and is clearly aligned to the business needs.

e-Recruitment and e-Selection

e-Recruitment and selection are critical success factors for any talent acquisition team endeavouring toward success and competitive processes in a digital age. Organisation C has an e-recruitment system which assists with sourcing, applicant tracking and workflow system, additionally leveraging systems such as Giraffe for voice analytics and geo-location of candidates.

According to Participant 3.1: “...a great e-recruitment system provides an outstanding applicant experience that progresses quickly and keeps applicants informed, while continuing to ensure that each application is given due consideration.” In doing so it enhances both the employer brand and candidate experience.

Further, making data driven recruitment decisions is also a key feature of the modern recruitment team. A good e-recruitment system according to Participant 3.3, provides high quality management information that supports the proactive management of the recruitment process. Lastly a good e-recruitment strategy allows recruitment personnel to focus more on strategic sourcing and talent management strategies and less on the administration aspects of the role.

Participant 3.2 adds that the organisation needs systems which can be customised to its unique needs to create efficiency and allow the acquisition functionality to move with the trends. According to Participant 3.1, the current system is too time consuming and does not allow for users to take initiative. For example, e-recruitment system users are unable to automatically match the candidates' CVs to the job specification on the system. The participant expects that e-recruitment should be designed in such a way that it is agile and adaptable to changing organisation needs and should be an end-to-end process from application to on-boarding.

The joint vision of the participants from Organisation C, are to integrate people practices that disrupt, simplify and allow them to serve their people in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Participant 3.2 adds: "I don't think the e-recruitment system caters for that" implying that there is still room for growth in the way the current e-recruitment system functions.

Participants' responses imply that there is consensus that it is extremely important to align the current recruitment practices of Organisation C with that of the external environment. The digitally disruptive market which has a greater tech-savvy audience has made it imperative to ensure that the recruitment system used by Organisation C attracts and speaks to the right talent in terms of organisational fit.

Organisation C is currently using an e-recruitment platform which is aligned with various job boards and portals to ensure easy access to all those who would like to join the company.

The current e-recruitment system is powered by PNet for the Intranet and external careers page. Most large organisations have e-recruitment/automated tracking systems and in many cases the website generates more job applicants than clients for the business. This is purely driven by the demand for employment in a high unemployment driven economy.

Having a seamless application process that can fit into the ecosystem between different functions of the business is crucial. Additionally, having a service provider which thoroughly understands the business model and needs makes it cutting-edge in

terms of future product development for the talent acquisition function. As mentioned above traditional recruitment is going to be around for few more years, as the access to proper internet and spread of coverage gets better. People will rely more on email or e-recruitment systems to apply for jobs. Participant 3.3 elaborates by saying: “We still get over 100 CVs a week of walk-ins to the office”.

Employer Branding

While exploring the participants’ views on employer branding, the responses were varied. Some participants said that this is a critical requirement for modern recruitment when talent advisors want to achieve success in a digital age. Overall it is also a great tool to reduce overall recruitment costs by targeting passive candidates. More so, Participant 3.1 and Participant 3.3 go on to mention that they are proud of the organisation they work for and are comfortable to be associated with the brand on their personal profile. Participant 3.1 elaborated by maintaining that they already see their personal page as a critical part of both the employer brand and communicating the company’s EVP. More so, Participant 3.3 further adds that by putting the company that one works for and job title on the platform, by default one becomes the ambassador of your own brand and of the company.

Alternative takes on the question posed as stated by Participant 3.2 and Participant 3.4 that despite understanding the rationale behind being a brand ambassador and having been requested to do so; they find discomfort in actively promoting the organisation’s brand on their personal profile taking into consideration issues such as the privacy concerns and public scrutiny. However, by linking the company on one’s profile one inherently becomes a brand ambassador.

Employer Value Proposition

The Human Capital Team in its entirety dedicates an array of resources to cultivating a strong EVP and makes significant attempts to communicate the message far and wide. The participants of Organisation C agree that the EVP must align to the HRM, business and brand strategy.

One of the most competitive techniques Organisation C makes use of in terms of EVP is striving to ensure that the remuneration and benefits offering is above industry benchmarks for potential employees. Moreover, as part of promoting EVP and enticing talent, existing employees are encouraged to take up the role of brand ambassadors. Existing employees are considered the most qualified resources to promote the organisation as they are fully aware of the company's culture, beneficial offerings and the type of people who would ideally fit into the company to add the greatest value.

Participant 3.1 substantiates the inference by saying: "Existing staff who are engaged are also the best brand ambassadors... know the profile of individual that will succeed in our environment and have candidate networks from previous roles that can be tapped into for successfully sourcing. Over half of our new hires are referrals made by existing staff. For Science, Technology and Economic Management (STEM) roles having a strong and relevant EVP and actively communicating the EVP in programs like graduate recruitment drives is crucial and something we leverage a lot".

LinkedIn and similar platforms are employed to promote the organisation's offerings to active and passive potential employees. It endeavours to endorse the brand not only as one of the largest call centre-driven insurance companies but also as an institute in need of critical and scarce skilled individuals.

Organisation C's efforts are visible in its online presence and marketing tactics on several media platforms ensuring that the widest possible audience is reached, both clients and talent. In doing so, the company tends to display and show off its unique and flexible culture, its world-class leadership and the potential for talent growth. This in totality along with other branding ideas are used to relay the employer value add offered by Organisation C. Participant 3.3 supports this by mentioning: "Currently on LinkedIn we have improved our Employee Value Proposition specifically in the face to face department and IT department, to show that we also attract those skillsets and not just a call centre [agents] but I think we can do some more work on critical skills and graduate recruitment".

Organisation C also makes use of its power as a household brand and industry standing. It may not be as large as some of its competitors – but the organisation

strives by maximally utilising its strengths in terms of encouraging growth of internal talent, favourable compensation packages for the contact centre agents, thorough learning and development programs as well as competitive pricing.

Participant 3.4 further elaborates: “Our company has a powerful history behind the brand...We always showcase our business on online platforms (website, social media et cetera) ... Lucrative payment system... great success of growing our own people internally and take our internal developmental programs seriously ... industry best training department”.

4.4.4. Impacts Experienced by Organisation C

4.4.4.1. Positive Impacts

The current talent acquisition techniques and tools used by Organisation C assist in ensuring that the hiring criteria promotes culturally aligned and high performing employee recruitment and selection. More so, the internal pipeline of leaders is consistently maintained and monitored which influences the TM process in terms of succession planning and development of leaders.

Moreover, positive impacts of the current tools and techniques used can be seen in the lowered attrition rates which is evident in the sub 20% annualised turnover in the business which is below the call centre industry benchmark indicating that practices concerning the hiring criteria are working along with the additional effort put into the TA process. Additionally, Organisation C has seen reduced cost of hires due the minimized use of recruitment agencies and increased effort in hiring internally.

Participant 3.2 mentioned that the selection process during interviews is centred on making the candidates feel comfortable and relaxed which is generally achieved through details such as the panel’s casual dress code and unique outlook on life and work, this could be a positive addition to the EVP offering and company image. the placement time of successful candidates. Participant 3.1 reported a mere 17 days on average for a placement to be concluded, enhancing the candidate experience and improving the company’s processes.

Finally, transformation goals are achieved, and better staff engagement rates are evident seeing as the overall talent acquisition process is highly focused on inclusion and diversity thus creating an image of equality and ample opportunity for internal employees.

4.4.4.2. Negative Impacts

The participants from Organisation C were hesitant to mention the downfalls experienced from their current TA practices although they stated some of the downfalls they have perceived due to their operating systems used for talent acquisition.

These drawbacks included the degree of user-friendliness of the e-recruitment system for the candidate. Participant 3.2 stated that their perception of the e-recruitment system in place is not as user-friendly as it could be nor is it efficient for applicants to use. This perception was derived from the average amount of time it took for applicants to complete job applications and the number of applicants who begin the application but do not complete it due to the excessive effort and time required.

Despite the downfalls perceived, the TA team actively looks at new e-recruitment platforms that are in line with the business and HRM strategy to reduce the negative impacts experienced. The team relies on tried and tested methods and some resistance to change in the business was prevalent. According to Participant 3.1, the HRM function has a seat at the executive table to have matters addressed in such as improving talent acquisition processes, which is comforting given that the industry is constantly changing, and talent needs must be prioritized.

Lastly, Participant 3.3 stated that there might be risk of nepotism given their reliance on staff referrals as one of the primary talent acquisition tools. There are procedures in place to minimize the risk of nepotism although full transparency and honesty are required from referees.

4.4.5. Best Practices and Policies

Participants from Organisation C mentioned a plethora of best practices which are applicable to their talent acquisition practices and policies. These were listed as opposed to described in depth due to the data collection method. The figure below is a culmination of their responses:

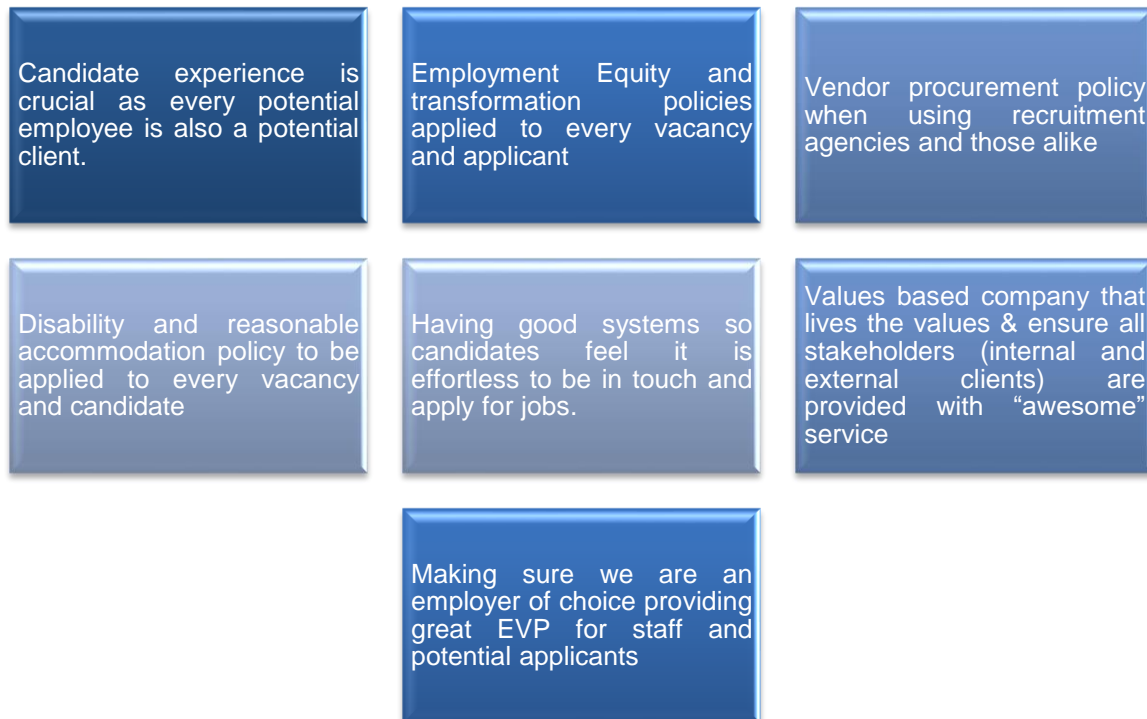


Figure 7: Talent Acquisition Best Practices and Policies in Organisation C

4.4.6. Conclusion

Prevalent in Organisation C is its passion for developing the internal talent. These efforts are clearly communicated when branding itself to active and passive applicants as a value proposition. More so, the talent acquisition techniques used by Organisation C's talent acquisition team are focused on specific spheres of professional areas which has played in their favour as a competitive technique. There is minimal generalisation during the acquisition process therefore attracting talent which is more aligned to the roles and the company's culture as opposed to techniques which attract applicants who meet only basic requirements.

4.5. Conclusion

The participants' responses indicated that the TA tools and techniques used by TA teams are dependent on factors such as the role seniority, costing of using tools such as fully licensed LinkedIn accounts as a recruiters and accessibility to talent through existing channels. The impacts on organisations are both positive and negative given that in this context, businesses are still growing into the digital age and accustoming to the demands of the environment. Finally, best practices seem to be aligned with organisational values, ensuring ethical and effective recruitment and selection.

Chapter 5 attempts to provide a meaningful collation of the results from the findings by applying relevant literary evidence to offer answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

The chapter begins by reporting on trends in talent acquisition tools and techniques as this was the initial research question. The trends reported on in the subsequent section are based on the empirical results. In an effort to provide further insight into the initial research questions posed, Chapter 5 discusses the impacts of the trends as well as best practices as advised by the respondents. The proceeding section ends off by mentioning implications of the research, limitations as experienced by the researcher and lastly concluding the chapter by synthesising the dissertation.

Chapter 5 primarily seeks to discuss the results of the case studies from Chapter 4 by making use of the empirical results as well as literature to provide a comprehensive view of the current state of talent acquisition trends in the South African context. The discussion is compartmentalised into sections based on the case themes which emerged from the qualitative interview questions based on the primary and secondary research inquiries.

5.2. Talent Acquisition Tools and Techniques Used by Organisation A, B and C

In response to research objective 1, listed below is a plethora of tools and techniques used by the participating organisations. The intention was to report on the findings from the sample of three organisations, with the hope that companies in similar industries and environments would be able to relate and potentially inform change to their current practices.

Notice that the list contains tools and techniques which vary in technological advancement making these trends applicable to diverse contexts within the broader financial setting. Although the participating organisations function in the insurance industry, environmental factors affect the way talent acquisition is done requiring a certain degree of flexibility in the way talent is acquired.

5.2.1. Contract Houses and Recruitment Agencies

Contractors are increasingly being brought in to fill roles that are critical and urgent where permanent staff are unavailable and graduate employees are still being skilled up. This saves on costs most of the time, as contractors are only employed for the duration of a specific project. It is worth noting the difference between contractors and talent hired from recruitment agencies as the cost structures are different. Recruitment agencies tend to cost more as they provide talent which are to be permanently hired by the organisation and the agency is therefore entitled to a percentage of the annual gross salary whereas contract houses provide talent on a project need basis.

5.2.2. Head-hunting

Given the recent shift to online recruitment, techniques such as open days at universities and offering bursaries and scholarships need to be reiterated and brought back to life to ensure the face-to-face component of recruitment is valued. Another related technique is on-going recruitment days. These are focused days where the TA team sets out to search for candidates for entry level positions to provide such talent with the necessary exposure in the business and help them to understand what goes on in the working world. In addition, the business simultaneously equips itself to continue the talent pipeline.

Often, graduates fresh out of university are approached before competing organisations reach them. Candidates are approached based on their qualifications, societal contributions, innovations and potential value to the company on a national and international basis. Headhunting also applies to executive roles where field specialists are sought after by talent advisors. Headhunting can be achieved through various platforms including networking, LinkedIn and referrals. Once junior/graduate employees are hired, significant effort is put into ensuring these employees are skilled up to the level which they are required to function at. This has been proven to solve for the current climate given the lack of scarce skilled employees.

5.2.3. Referrals and Boomerang Hires

Referrals and boomerang hires are popular as managers often become comfortable with hiring candidates who are referred by a trusted source. Additionally, applicants who are employed based on a reputable reference tend to have more at stake and therefore show more initiative and greater results. Word of mouth is highly favoured, although the business finds it imperative for each applicant to follow the standard process including fingerprint checks and verification of qualifications to ensure fairness and quality. Boomerang hiring applies to candidates who have left the organisation but have reapplied for a role. Also, these could be individuals who have worked within the company and have been headhunted after they have left.

5.2.3. Specialised Talent Acquisition Team

Although applicants usually must follow the standard process of applying via the organisation's career site, the TA team is advanced in their structure. There are various functions that operate individually but in sync with one another. For example, there are those that source specifically for the IT units of the business, and others who source directly from universities and base applicants off referrals. The TA team builds relationships with recruitment agencies to satisfy the overall business needs in terms of the skills required.

5.2.4. Candidate Assessments

There is minimal mention of selection tools and techniques such as assessments and in-basket tests from the respondents of the participating organisations. This is in contrast to an exploratory study conducted by Louw (2013) which indicated that in organisations in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, interviews are used by 94.73% of the respondents, followed by reference checking which was used 84.21% of the time, while a further 73.68% of organisations made use of assessment centres. These results may be indicative of the popularity of selection mechanisms used in part of South Africa.

Candidate testing is role and business unit specific. Oftentimes, candidates are required to complete several psychometric tests under the supervision of a registered

Industrial Psychologist in all three participating organisations. More so, case studies are gaining momentum as managers work with the TA team to develop case studies for candidates to complete as part of the interview. These are usually highly technical and advanced assessments, especially for critical roles. The case studies are given to interviewees with the intention of observing their practical knowledge, ability to cope under pressure and assess several other attributes to determine whether they could potentially fit into the environment. The participating organisations had not mentioned any practices alluding to mobile tests or CAT as methods of candidate assessment as described in the literature.

5.2.5. Digitalisation, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning

The success enjoyed by the organisations which are making concerted efforts to move towards digitalised talent acquisition mechanisms have been alluded to by Popov (2018). Voice and behavioural assessments are examples of how South Africa is striding forward to keep abreast of trends in the attraction and acquisition of talent. For example, in Organisation C, candidates are required to submit videos which summarise their CVs. The respondents reported favourable outcomes as this saved time during applicant screening and interviews. More so, the TA team had more time to ensure the applicant pool received equal attention and there was minimal neglect of applicants for that role.

Although South Africa may not be leading the way for AI and Machine Learning, organisations are making their way toward it. Recruitment systems are more often being automated and digitalised to include features such as Chatbots on the careers websites to improve candidate experience and display the organisation's state of evolution as found in Organisation C. Further, AI was perceived as futuristic until the organisation began to make use of it on a regular basis, realising that AI had already been a part of basic daily functioning in tasks such as ordering an Uber, navigating with Google Maps or online adverts.

5.2.6. Strategic Partnerships

Such partnerships contribute to the organisation's social and corporate responsibility by encouraging employment of youth and underprivileged individuals.

Partnerships with Harambee, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and the Quadriplegic Association of South Africa (QASA), for instance, contribute to accelerating youth employment and accommodating physically challenged individuals with minimal employment opportunities. Another example of beneficial partnerships is with initiatives such as "WeThinkCode" for software developers, especially for scarce skilled roles in the IT field. WeThinkCode also targets Actuarial Career fairs and sponsorships to attract Actuarial graduates.

5.2.7. Specialised Recruitment Models

Creating a specialised recruitment model for each business segment has been seen to be successful in organisations where there are various types of operational requirements. For example, the attraction and acquisition process for call centre agents would depend heavily on organisational branding and mass recruitment. Applicable to this would be automating processes such as screening CVs. In contrast, when sourcing for talent to place in support roles, the TA team would make greater use of social media platforms and interact more on a one-on-one basis with candidates.

5.2.8. e-Recruitment Systems

e-Recruitment systems assist with sourcing, applicant tracking and the workflow system, additionally leveraging systems such as Giraffe for voice analytics and geo-location of candidates.

These systems are customisable to a large extent, allowing organisations to amend the system to their preference to allow for maximum efficiency and user-friendliness. The overall goal of any recruitment management system for e-recruitment and selection is to make the process as simple, quick and easy as possible to persuade potential employees to apply.

Also evident in the application process is the organisation's maturity in terms of technical advancement and the importance of digitalisation to the company. If there are several steps for candidates to follow and the system requires masses of information, chances are that the company is at the beginning stages of advancement. Additionally, the applicant tracking system include adverts which are published on multiple sites such as different job boards, external social media such as LinkedIn and PNet. Candidates are then directed to an applicant tracking system, which is one of the tools used to maintain the applicant database.

Finally, Smith and Kidder (2010) findings indicate with certainty that the online platform of e-recruitment has positively influenced applicants and encouraged a greater number of applicants.

5.2.9. Social Media

Tyagi (2012) reports on social media as a talent acquisition tool, stating that due to the recent acknowledgement of the importance of recruitment and selection, organisations are allocating greater resources to these initiatives. The aim is to create a competitive talent acquisition strategy with attainable goals to maintain competitive advantage and acquire the best talent South Africa has to offer. The participating organisations did not mention the use of any other social media tool as a primary sourcing tool apart from LinkedIn, and the latter is one of the primary tools used by the participating organisations to attract and acquire talent.

TA teams in Organisation B are promoting the use of executive and managerial personal pages to serve as brand ambassadors for the companies. Overall the intention of having a customised LinkedIn page is to reveal aspects of the business that are not routinely revealed to the external environment, such as the internal culture and atmosphere. In addition, LinkedIn is often used to communicate EVP and the like to attract as many candidates as possible including active and passive contenders. Organisations which had the full LinkedIn licence provide insight by saying that the TA teams have the capability of customising content based on the ideal skills required for a vacancy. Organisations can add an enormous amount of content on their career

pages regarding vacancies. This functionality creates a personalised feel and contributes to branding the organisation's culture and value proposition.

Based on the empirical results, it may be concluded that the statistics provided by Chaudhary (2017) can be attested to seeing the increased use of LinkedIn as a talent acquisition tool in the representative sample organisations.

5.2.10. Employer Branding

The results from Organisation A, B and C demonstrate similarities from the statements mentioned in Li and Bryan (2010) in that hiring managers are encouraged to display the organisation's strategy, EVP, successes and department-specific information on their personal pages. The aim is to try to attract talent by conveying a sense of personalisation should candidates be interested in inquiring further about a specific role or team. EVP demonstrates what the employer has to offer to potential employees and the benefits current employees are receiving.

Notably, the EVP communicated via its multiple platforms must align with the organisation's business, Human Capital and Talent Acquisition strategy to achieve the desired results. One of the factors communicated as EVP was prompt and consistent candidate feedback. If a candidate is rejected in the acquisition process, they are required to complete a form that includes sections on their candidate experience, observations and perceptions of the company, along with similar questions to enlighten the Talent Acquisition team on where they can improve the overall experience.

More so, Bugg (2015) mentioned the importance of consistently broadcasting the employer brand. Similarly, participants from Organisation A, B and C have found that a platform such as LinkedIn is favourable as a branding tool to advertise their culture, goals and initiatives. The idea is to further promote a large brand as an employer of choice based on its workplace mind-set and further benefits.

Some participants maintain that they are comfortable with being brand ambassadors for the organisation as they are proud of the organisation they work for and are comfortable to be associated with the brand on their personal LinkedIn profile. In contrast, a few participants from Organisation A and C find discomfort in actively promoting the organisation's brand on their personal profile, taking into consideration potential risks in terms of privacy and public scrutiny.

5.3. Impacts Experienced by Organisation A, B and C

In answering research objective 2, I will discuss both positive and negative perceived impacts of current talent acquisition tools and techniques.

5.3.1. Positive Impacts

Positive impacts from current talent acquisition tools and techniques used by respondents from Organisation B include positive candidate experience, greater company exposure through branding initiatives and massive cost saving due to the reduced use of recruitment agencies. Candidates' experience throughout the acquisition cycle is imperative. Organisation B works as if every candidate could be a current client or a potential client, hence the service received needs to be as flawless as possible regardless of the success of the candidates. The branding initiatives held by the company are very much aligned to the literature written by Kaur (2015) in that the finer details have been included on online branding platforms. Details such as environmental factors and the company culture have been incorporated into the company description to ensure that those who are attracted to the business see similarities between their work ethic and that of Organisation B.

Moreover, the favourable impacts seen in Organisation C includes outcomes such as candidate pools which are more culturally aligned to the company, a dependable talent pipeline of leaders and an overall reduction in costs of hiring all whilst achieving the organisation's transformation goals and maintaining fair attrition levels. These outcomes are aligned to the organisation's vision and strategy as the industry is continuously at war for talent. Lam and Hawkes (2017) placed emphasis on the

beneficial outcomes and impacts seen from digitising the talent acquisition process, Organisation C had experienced some of these outcomes with regards to their use of video CVs instead of requesting face-to-face initial interviews especially for entry level roles. The benefits reaped have been reduced time taken for the hiring process to be completed and improved process efficiency. There has been less time spent on the logistics of arranging interviews, time taken out of panel diaries and the quality of candidates can be assumed at an efficient pace as opposed to having to meet each candidate personally.

5.3.2. Negative Impacts

Naturally, there are bound to be challenges when working with a system that is continually developing and improving. This is the case with Organisation B, where one of the present challenges is the multiple steps necessary to complete the acquisition process from the TA's perspective and the time backlog that accompanies these steps. Due to the time lapse, the talent advisory team may skip steps in the process or rush the TA cycle to meet service level agreements (SLAs). The downfall of poorly executed recruitment due to e-recruitment systems was mentioned by Kaur (2015) in that sections of the talent pool may be neglected due to various reasons. Organisation B respondents reported that they were guilty of such neglect as reliance on the e-recruitment system sometimes resulted in poor screening and weakened criteria for hiring. The e-recruitment system used by Organisation B is continually improved to produce an efficient mechanism to recruit potential employees, although in the meantime, advisory personnel may experience drawbacks which need to be corrected as far as possible.

Other outcomes of rushing the acquisition process or fighting against time to complete the required actions to complete the acquisition process are poorly planned actions and wastages of motion, skills and overall time of the participating parties. The lengthy process had also led to managers finding the vacancy obsolete and eventually cancel the requisition as the role tasks are merely reallocated to other employees. Drawbacks experienced from the reallocation of vacancy tasks comprise of dissatisfied employees

who feel over-worked and taken advantage of without rewards, reducing overall employee engagement.

A challenge mentioned by participants from Organisation C referred to unascertained role specifications; this has been seen before where managers and the acquisition team had not created clear paths of communication. Hiring managers assume that the acquisition team will automatically seek candidates who are identical to the previous role resident although this is not the case. Kaur (2015) also mentions that uncertain job specifications can cause great harm to the company's reputation and the reliability of the careers page if job adverts online are misleading.

Organisation C has seen many candidates succeed through the acquisition process only to enter the organisations and have their expectations not met. This has been due to the relay of inaccurate information during the interview stage where hiring managers convey idealistic information about the environment or scope of work. This challenge speaks to misalignment of expectations between the organisation and candidates.

Participants from Organisation C ropes in ethical practice by emphasising the importance of advertising and relaying the same requirements and expectations in the interview as in the job advertisement. By maintaining an open relationship with candidates from the beginning of the TA process, the TA team can build a reliable talent pipeline of potential employees solely due to maintaining an open and trusting line of communication.

Further, obtaining leader support and co-operation has proven difficult as the TA team intends to move towards a process-driven model where there is greater structure and efficiency. Finally, the current recruitment management system is not as user friendly as it could be in Organisation C which could harm the volume of applications received. In keeping with the difficulties experienced in the talent acquisition process, Organisation C has seen a few as well. Similar to Organisation B, participants who work directly with the recruitment management system in Organisation C have also noticed defects in the system, such as the lack of user-friendliness. The system is

improved upon as defects are detected as the end goal is to have the most attractive system to entice applications and welcome applicants with the ease and convenience offered by the careers page and other application portals of the organisation.

The TA team in Organisation C is further extending its efforts to improve the acquisition process by weeding out sources of nepotism, which have been seen to come from referrals. Furthermore, resistance to the changes in the TA process has been observed and acknowledged, which the team is actively working on to improve.

5.4. Best Practices and Policies

In response to research objective 3, this section highlights the best policies and practices described by the participating organisations. Based on the descriptions of best practices and policies provided by the participants, these may be described as boundaries within which the participating organisations should function to ensure that legal and social standards are upheld concerning the recruitment and selection of talent.

Apart from adhering to legal and compliance requirements such as employment equity and the like, participants from Organisation B implied that best practices and policies in their company include applying fairness to the actual monetary offer made to candidates. Kaur (2015) alluded to being careful when publicly creating salary expectations for applicants as these benchmarks are subject to change.

The policy and practice of achieving fair monetary offers had received great emphasis as the TA team had seen instances where this was not the reality and employment offers were concluded based on inconsistent criteria. As such, the TA team in Organisation B had to diligently work with the HR Business Partners to draft employment offers which are based on the role necessities, level of skills and competencies as well as qualifications brought into the company by the potential employees.

Additionally, participants from Organisation A and C pride themselves on maintaining fair and stringent remuneration structures, especially for newly acquired talent. This

suggests that the organisations work hard to deliver reasonable and consistent remuneration packages or employment offers much like Organisation B. By adhering to remuneration package calculation criteria, organisations are able to avoid contradicting best practices and policies, applying conscious/unconscious bias, stereotyping or nepotism to the final annual remuneration package offered to potential employees.

Kluemper (2013) speaks in-depth about treating candidates fairly in several instances and in all steps of the acquisition process, fairness referring to a variety of ethical standards. Participants from Organisation A and C pride themselves on maintaining best practices such as ensuring and influencing their teams to treat all applicants fairly and equally during the application process as applicants who apply for jobs on the careers page should not be treated with any less attention than those who were headhunted. Every applicant has to be treated with equal attention, respect and consideration from the TA involved, regardless of the calibre of applicants, subjectivity of the TA or the method of vacancy application.

More so, the participants from Organisation A, B and C state that maintaining full transparency with candidates is imperative. Participants from Organisation B for instance mentioned that transparency is applicable to interviews, as hiring managers should always be upfront with candidates about expectations and environmental factors of the business.

In comparison to the participants from Organisation A and B, the participants from Organisation C placed a significant amount of stress on including high quality EVP as one of their best practices. This is evident in the best policies and practices in place which cater for applicants to the highest possible degree. Their best practices and policies rely on the consideration that each applicant is a potential client and should therefore be treated with same degree of respect and professional etiquette.

As mentioned earlier, apart from meeting the legal and compliance requirements in terms of employee hiring standards, Organisation C works conscientiously to apply transformational policies to their current and future workforce. In this way, individuals from the LGBTQ community, physically/mentally challenged community and others

who are generally under catered for by the larger corporations – are consciously catered for on an increased basis at Organisation C.

Further, the vetting process used for candidates as mentioned earlier by Kluemper (2013) is equally strict when selecting HR providers for the Organisation C. Although each company has processes in place to confirm the viability of recruitment agencies and HR providers, Organisation C placed special attention on its vendor procurement policies which seeks to vet each vendor thoroughly especially since the use of such vendors are not encouraged.

Finally, the results presented in Chapter 4 identified the trend of using LinkedIn and other social media platforms for talent acquisition. The participants from all the organisations included in the survey did not sufficiently address the best practices and policies in place for the use of internet-based recruitment and selection. The concern here is that there are either very few policies in place or best practices are not being regularly communicated to the TA teams to educate them on the cautions to be taken when using any internet-based tools.

The subsequent sections seek to conclude the present research endeavour by providing insight into the limitations experienced during the process of completion, implications for organisations as realised during the research endeavour and finally, synthesising the content by ultimately answering the research questions initially posed.

5.5. Limitations

One of the limitations experienced in this study includes the difficulty of retrieving literature regarding best practices and policies for the use of digitalisation and automation which was extremely challenging and had therefore been suggested as an area of interest for future research.

Due to the exploratory nature of the research endeavour, the empirical results are representative of a smaller sample as opposed to entire an industry or masses of

companies. Maintaining relevance proved particularly challenging based on the nature of the research question, although emphasis was placed on trends that had gained momentum in the last 5-6 years at least.

More so, given the diversity in the roles which the sample group represent, the participants interpreted the interview questions differently. This created inconsistency in the results as the themes from Organisation A did not coincide with those from Organisation B and C to the degree of which the researcher had expected.

Further, the researcher had some experience with talent acquisition as encountered in the working world, but this may not have been extensive enough to declare the researcher an expert in the field. The lack of practical experience may have influenced the interview inquiries, which could have been more in-depth had there been greater practical experience. Furthermore, the lack of experience inhibited the researcher's ability to critically evaluate best practices regarding the use of trends such as employer branding and digitalisation of acquisition processes.

Additionally, although the topic states "Talent Acquisition", which refers to the recruitment and selection of talent, the participating organisations did not place enough emphasis on their selection process in terms of assessments and other selection methods as discussed in the literature review. This implies that their selection practices do not go much further than the minimum psychometric and technical tests.

Lastly, to provide a broader view of the topic, it is advised that future researchers consider a larger sample that is representative of the various industries in South Africa. This would contribute greatly to a talent advisory community in academia and in practice in terms of reporting trends in the TA space.

5.6. Implications

To remain relevant and ahead of competitors, the attraction and acquisition of top talent in South Africa is imperative. As the world shifts towards complete automation

and digitalisation, it is only fitting that South Africa make every effort to keep up the pace. The organisations that participated in this study may not be fully reflective of the South African context with regards to talent acquisition trends, although it is a fair indicator.

Organisations are increasingly realising the value of assigning greater volumes of resources to hunting for the best talent South Africa has to offer, and to achieve such goals, the tools and techniques applied should ideally be top-shelf quality. Management and talent advisory teams must work together to achieve common goals such as acquiring the necessary talent, especially in a hostile environment where scarce skilled talent is becoming more difficult to locate.

5.7. Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research provides ideas for fellow researchers to possibly seek further insight into the current knowledge on these topics. The suggestions below are based on the researcher's observations in the literature reviewed and intend to fill in potential gaps:

- Equipping the workforce to work with technology as opposed to defying technological advancements
- Equipping South African organisations to introduce and implement digitalisation and automation effectively
- Delving into best practices and policies for the use of digitalisation and automation of talent acquisition processes in the South African context
- Balancing the use of low-cost techniques and technologically advanced tools for acquiring talent in South Africa

5.8. Concluding Remarks

The role of talent acquisition and talent advisory teams was briefly discussed, collating literature and the results from the case studies conducted. Further, the participating organisations were kind enough to divulge the variety of tools and techniques used to

attract and acquire talent in the current market, some of which included employer branding, LinkedIn as a primary sourcing tool, and university open days to attract younger talent and build the talent pipeline further. More so, the various positive and negative experiences of each organisation were reported on by supporting the claims of participants with those of academics. Finally, in terms of best practice policies, the participating organisations seem to consider the basic legal requirements along with additional considerations such as nepotism and bias to ensure that their talent acquisition processes are held to the highest standards possible.

The array of talent acquisition tools and techniques may not all apply to a single organisation, although combination tools and techniques may assist in updating current practices for organisations in various industries, of various sizes and structures. The participating organisations do not take great cognisance of the selection aspect of the talent acquisition stage in comparison to the recruitment of candidates. At most, these companies require basic psychometric assessments, reference checks and criminal checks to be done before presenting an offer to a candidate. Best practices are well aligned to basic requirements in South Africa and the organisations pride themselves on going above and beyond to create cultures of diversity and inclusion in their TA initiatives.

The effort to discover and report on trending talent acquisition practices in the South African context was successful, as the trends that appeared in the empirical evidence seem to be aligned with the extant literature. Literature revealed that trends included automation and digitalisation of processes, more emphasis on employer branding and social media along with mobile testing, computer adaptive testing and internet screening. Likewise, the participating organisations clearly indicated many similarities in their talent acquisition practices with additional tools and techniques used based on various criteria.

Therefore, it may be said with confidence that South Africa is moving towards an age of digitalisation and greater efficiency by assigning strategic value-adding tasks to the human component, while automating recruitment and selection processes and making use of smarter, faster techniques to attract and acquire talent. The overall intentions

of the participating organisations are to create efficient workforces while building for the future.

The impacts perceived from applying the talent acquisition practices discussed in Chapter 5 are positive and negative in their own right. The positive impacts have been encountered mainly from an efficiency perspective whereas the negative impacts are seen mainly due the need for development of current e-recruitment systems and mindset shifts in leaders.

In an effort to complete the research question, best practices were addressed when using certain talent acquisition tools and techniques in the current context. Such best practises included adhering to legal and compliance requirements such as maintaining Employment Equity standards. The participating organisations went over and above standard requirements by applying transformation policies and ensuring fairness in the application process for candidates. The best practices in place are not necessarily traditional although these have been shown to add great value to the organisations' brand and EVP.

So, as a researcher and budding professional, I pose the question to each talent advisory individual and organisation: How will you adjust your talent acquisition practices to keep abreast of the trends and build a greater "talent force"?

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Appendix

Appendix A: Differences Between Conventional and Social Media Recruitment

Measure or criteria	Conventional recruitment	Social media recruitment
Objective/utility	Active demand fulfilment	Active and passive recruitment opportunities
Communication channels	Referrals, job boards and recruitment consultants	Social media platforms include a plethora of networking opportunities such as LinkedIn, Twitter, blog sites and forums
Metrics of measure	Pre- and post-hire outcomes, operational efficiencies	Wider audience for employer branding and personalised engagement
Locus of control	HRM function	Social media community
Level of individualisation	Medium to low level of individualisation	High level of individualisation
Target applicant group	Access restricted to applicants who meet exact role requirements	Greater access to Generation Y candidates, internet-savvy and those who are actively on social media
Length of engagement	Generally short-term engagement from application to on-boarding of applicant	Continuous engagement and communication between recruiters and potential employees

Appendix B: Participants' Biographical Information

Participant Details – Organisation A

Role	Years of experience	Gender
Senior Business Analyst	26	Female
Web Analyst	8	Female
Talent Acquisition Specialist	13	Female
Health Systems Project Manager	22	Female
Development Manager	12	Male
Head of Application Infrastructure Services	30	Male
Head of Department	19	Male

Participant Details – Organisation B

Role	Years of experience	Gender
Human Resources Business Partner	5	Female
Group Lead: Talent Management	14	Female
Senior Talent Advisor	21	Female
Junior Talent Advisor	5	Female
IT Executive: Rewards	20	Female
Senior Operations Manager: Shared Services	15	Male

Participant Details – Organisation C

Role	Years of experience	Gender
Team Manager Recruiters and IT Recruitment specialist	9	Female
Manager of HRBPs	15	Female
Chief People Officer	20	Male
Manager of Recruiters	12	Male

Appendix C: Qualitative Survey Outline Used for Data Collection

Topic: Trending Talent Acquisition Techniques in the South African Context

1. Organisational biography

- 1.1. Company's client base
- 1.2. Historical background
- 1.3. Company development
- 1.4. Perceptions of growth in Talent Management in the industry and the company

2. Talent acquisition techniques

- 2.1. Current talent acquisition tools used by the company (including recruitment and selection)
- 2.2. Strategies used to attract the highest quality talent from entry level upwards
- 2.3. Perceptions of trends in TM and TA in the industry
- 2.4. Opinion on insourcing vs outsourcing of talent based on current efficiency of TA practices
- 2.5. Thoughts on e-recruitment and selection vs non-automated techniques of recruiting and selecting talent
- 2.6. Competitive techniques being used or developed to improve TA success rate (for example branding strategies, EVP and headhunting)
- 2.7. The importance of TA and the development thereof
- 2.8. Perceived positive outcomes due to the use of techniques utilized by the company
- 2.9. Perceived downfalls experienced due to the use of techniques utilized by the company
- 2.10. Best practice when making use of acquisition trends

3. Applicable to line management

- 3.1. What do you understand by the term "talent acquisition"
- 3.2. To what extent do you think you should be directly involved with HR and the candidates?
- 3.3. What strategies do you use if the need to fill a critical role is urgent and the TA team has been unsuccessful?
- 3.4. Given that the IT/banking industry is globally competitive, how would you describe your recruitment and selection practices for critical roles as cutting-edge
- 3.5. To what extent do you make decisions in the talent acquisition process?
 - 3.5.1. How does this affect the overall quality of talent hired?
 - 3.5.2. What influence does your level of involvement have on the speed at which the process is completed?
 - 3.5.3. How do you think you could positively influence the attraction of talent to the company?

Appendix D: Consent Form

I, Dashalia Naidu (Researcher) hereby agree to maintain confidentiality regarding the information disclosed by the participating parties in the mentioned research report. Such information may include company financials, competitive figures or other information the participants wish to be kept private. The information collected is solely for academic purposes and the final report will be made available to any party who wishes to access the document.

I, _____ (Participant) hereby agree to provide truthful and insightful information to the Researcher. I will disclose information which is content rich and applicable to the research inquiries as indicated whilst simultaneously respecting company policies in terms of public records.

Researcher

Participant

Date

Appendix E: Introductory Email Sent to Participants

Good day,

Trusting this email finds you well.

I am a Master's student at the University of Pretoria, currently completing my dissertation which sets out to discover trends in talent acquisition tools and techniques used by employers in the South African context.

I humbly request your assistance in arranging a 60-minute interview slot where I intend on dissecting your practices in this regard to add value to my data collection and the Talent Management field.

Attached below is an outline of the qualitative survey to be conducted.

Kindly advise if this request would be possible

Thank you for your consideration

Kindest regards

Dashalia Naidu

Appendix F: List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Concept
SA	South Africa
TM	Talent Management
TA	Talent Acquisition
IOP	Industrial and Organisational Psychology
HRM	Human Resources Management
HR	Human Resources
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Trans-sexual and Queer individuals
AI	Artificial Intelligence
HBR	Harvard Business Review
CAT	Computer Adaptive Testing
UIT	Unproctored Internet Testing
e-recruitment	Online/automated driven recruitment tools and techniques
e-selection	Online/automated driven selection tools and techniques
e-TA	Online/automated driven talent acquisition tools and techniques
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EVP	Employer Value Proposition
STEM	Science, Technology and Economic Management
HR	Human Resources

*******END*******